

Part 1 - Early years of Jesus

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- [0 : 0 0] I'm going to read from Luke and verse 21. When the time came for the purification rites required by the law of Moses to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.
- As it is written in the law of the Lord is to be consecrated to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with white pair of doves or two young pigeons.
- Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon who was waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.
- Moved by the Spirit he went into the Lord. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the law required. Simeon said, So the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed and the sword will pierce your prophet Anna.
- The daughter of Phinell of the tribe of Asher. She was very old. She had lived with her husband seven and then was a widow until she was 84. She never left the temple but worshipped.
- [2 : 0 6] To them at that very moment she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking for Israel. When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the law of the Lord they were to Nazareth.
- And the child grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom and the grace of God. Let's pray one moment. Thank you for this book of books.
- Thank you that at the heart of them is yours. And thank you that we can unravel it. Learn from it. And get close to you through it. Thank you.
- Amen. If you haven't heard yet, devotions and fellowship. Sundays at 6.
- Wester Hills Baptist Church. We're currently working through the biography. Last week we kicked off thinking about biographies in general.
- [3 : 1 3] Life stories. And I started by asking a good life story. A good biography. A good autobiography. And we talked about our favourite ones in bits and pieces.
- It helped us. And on that note I was thinking, given what I've just read from Luke. Because Acts chapter 1 and verse 1 begins.
- In my former book I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach. That former book, of course, being Luke's gospel.
- Luke's biography of the life and times of Jesus. Of the biography begins. Many have undertaken to draw up an account filled among us.
- Just as they were handed down to us by those who from the... And servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself, Dr. Luke, briefing from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account.
- [4 : 2 4] 1 of Acts goes on to tell us of Jesus' ascension. Followed by the next. About the worldwide Christian church. Being pioneered.
- And how it all came to be. It's filled with journeys, trials, prison breaks, revivals, and so much more. It's so exciting. Read it again. But. But.

Luke. Or Dr. Luke, as I say. He came. To get everything absolutely correct. Correct. As I say. Luke knew.

The utter importance. Of being his sister. And again, as a doctor. Luke knew. All too well. The importance.

Of truth. He used his medically skilled mind. To observe. And thoroughly investigate. To investigate. To investigate.

[5 : 25] All the talk. Circulating. About Jesus. But he also used his Greek. To be fully open minded.

He was not biased. Or under pressure from Judaism. So put those two together. A highly skilled medical. And a free thinking Greek.

His investigation can be trusted. And so the diagnosis. Of all his thorough. The good news of Jesus. It's true.

It's true. And so here's. The very, very, very important. Everyone to grasp. The pioneering.

Of the church account. It's amazing. It is needed. But. It's absolutely. Nothing. Jesus Christ. It's meaningless.

[6 : 25] Without the account. Of why. As Luke. Clearly. Clearly states. And starts with. In verse 1 of Acts. In my former book. In other words.

Before you read this. This account in Acts. Make sure you go and read the first. Because it's all about Jesus. It all starts with Jesus. Jesus. And so.

Let us hear. Baptist Church. Let's spend the rest of the year. Between now. Our Christmas. Program. Bar special. Dr. Luke suggests. And let's enjoy.

The adventure stories. Of the Christian church. Being built. And so. As Luke. Suggests. Let's first. Go. And get. Deeply. Reacquainted.

With King Jesus. Our new sermon. Series. Thus being. In Luke's books. And so. There at the start.

[7 : 20] Luke. Goes deep. With the detail. Of Jesus' birth. In fact. He goes even further back. Filling us in. On all the wondrous events.

Surrounding that. The angel's words. To Zechariah. John the Baptist. The angel. Appearing to Mary. Mary's response. Mary and Elizabeth.

Spending time. During their. Chapter 2. Jesus is born. And then. As we read. This morning. By halfway. Through. Jesus. At the temple. And at this point.

Anna. Enter the scene. woman. And just to quickly. Recapture that. It had been revealed. To Simeon. By the Holy Spirit.

That he would not die. Moved by the Spirit. He went into the temple courts. And then. Verse 29. He took the child. Saying. Sovereign. As you have promised. You may now dismiss your servant.

[8 : 20] In peace. For my eyes. Have seen your salvation. Then. Verse 31. Along. She gives thanks to God. and spoke about the child and all who were looking forward to it.

It's interesting, isn't it? Very, very, very interesting how certain people, you know, Abraham is remembered as trusting. John as doubtful.

Jonah as a runner. And so on and so on. But what about these two here? What about Sinai? Simeon, perhaps we could remember them as a man and a woman who was looking for Jesus.

Simeon was a good man during the time of Christ's birth. And as we just read, Luke tells us Simeon would not die before seeing the Messiah.

And so right on cue, verse 27, moved by the Spirit, he came in to the temple at the precise time. Mary and Joseph were there.

[9 : 26] This is the one. This is the one. And so seeing the boos was everything for Simeon. Because he was seeing Jesus.

So his response, his wholehearted, beautiful response, only has one. And praised God. Verse 28. Saying, You can now take me to heaven, Lord.

What an incredibly ambitious character. Some people don't want to die until they have seen the whole wide world.

Continents, highest peaks, mightiest rivers, deepest jungles. Because Simeon, Simeon's ambition was quite a bit bigger. Simeon didn't want to die until he had seen the world.

He didn't want to die until he had seen the one who formed and put together the whole wide. What to do was see Jesus. And as soon as he had laid eyes on Jesus, his highest ambition was achieved.

[10 : 38] His life and his days on earth were. Because he had seen Jesus. And verse 38 isn't far behind. In momentous moment, Anna, who had continuously, for decades on end, prayed and looked.

Prayed and sat involved. And again, through Holy Spirit, was able to confirm, This child is God. This Jake Simeon, seeing Jesus, was all that was needed.

Was all that was needed. I suppose the chapter is full of people looking. It's bold searchers who all conclude everything Jesus.

I mean, like the shepherds. Earlier. You would think that being interrupted by the sky would be enough. But no. No. A bit like Simeon, they too were more ambitious.

As soon as all they could think about was getting to see Jesus. So they packed up for the night and found and saw Jesus. Max Lucado says you can trace the long line of Jesus seekers where there was a shepherd on a hillside who said to his work colleagues, Right, let's go and find Jesus.

[11 : 59] So, told by Matthew, they too, like the shepherds, were not satisfied. I'm sure it was a spectacular privilege to watch it, but again, like Simeon, the creator of the incredibleness.

So they stopped at nothing. One year, two years, however long it took, they looked endless when they finally found him and laid eyes on him.

Of Jesus' life in Luke's gospel present us with lots and a really, really important thing to point out here is they all succeeded, all accomplished the job.

They all found and saw the king. And something was the fact that Jesus wanted to be found.

He was from those on a hillside with nothing. Those from up high with frankincense and continuously in God's house are those who haven't even given God a thought yet.

[13 : 08] Whoever they were, if they set out to find him, he made sure they found him. Writers, they also keep us informed of the other side, i.e.

the ones such as Herod are those who didn't want to find Jesus. They didn't go looking. They made no attempt. They didn't even pull back. They did nothing.

Result, they never found Jesus. The big, massive point we are making this morning is that those who wanted Jesus found him.

And God made sure they did. Hebrews 11, verse 6 says, God rewarded seek him. Long before the New Testament writer was already doing it.

And praise God that it's a permanent promise for all. Think about others on up and beyond the birth chapters. John and Andre, they were disciples, serving alongside him.

[14 : 14] and for any of us, being in the ranks alongside the world's greatest enemy. But again, no, as soon as John said, hey, you see, Jesus, he's the one.

And note their very first encounter upon meeting Jesus. rather worth amazing, isn't it? Like most of us would, they didn't say, have you got a minute, Jesus?

Or what do you think about a particular topic or an opinion on something? No, it was Jesus, watch your address with Jesus. They wanted to know him. They wanted to get to know the real Jesus, the ways he lived, the way he loved, his hobbies, his knowledge, what made him smile, what made him laugh, what made him cry.

Where did he pray? His relationship with Father God. And you know something? More exciting here, I think. There's another level here. Because the characters we've mentioned so far, finding Jesus, seeing Jesus, here with John and Andrew, it goes to find him, they see him, but they go further and ask for him to really, really know him.

This was ambition with a Viet engine. It was just to find Jesus, it now had to be in a relationship with him, was to know Jesus fully.

[15 : 46] And just like all who seeked, we're finding. So hear the response to John and Andrew come and see where I live, come and see what I do, come and spend time with me.

And the response is the real friendship with Jesus. Jesus didn't respond, meet me at such a place, I'll explain, or give me a photo. He said, come right now, come and see my life, my ways, be my friends, be my disciples.

The accounts of this don't seize. Matthew, Matthew himself, working as a tax collector, keeping one eye on Roman accounts, and another eye on what Jesus responds, walking past his tax booth, and he says, come and follow me instead, Matthew.

Here, is God sees the heart. It's great and exciting to see what Andrew and they were rewarded all the more for it, but God is very understanding, very, very understanding nowadays, that we're not all extroverts like John and Andrew.

Some of us, most of us, are more introverted, but if our hearts truly want him, then as they will make sure we find him.

[17 : 06] And that was Matthew's experience. In his heart, he was quietly watching Jesus from a distance, but Jesus came to him, and he got the same response from Jesus as John and Andrew.

For in the next verse, he was having dinner at Matthew's house. This is friendship on another level. He's home having dinner, and eternal friendship had begun.

And there's many, many classes and cultures of life, Zacchaeus the crook, a centurion serving Rome, creators like Judas, Zaiot's deeply entrenched religious ones like Nicodemus and Joseph.

The others, their hearts were looking for Jesus, they wanted Jesus, and they got him. Of course, there was also the other ones who looked, found, and then said.

He wanted some of Jesus. He set out to find God, and again, as Hebrews says, God made sure he found encountering Jesus, and his message, the rich young ruler sadly detained.

[18 : 16] Warning, if you have been pushing the God door for a year, or 50 years, God will have made sure you have heard his message.

God will have made sure you have received his invite, his Hebrews promise, but you now need to respond and accept he didn't. But also, he could never use the excuse, I never knew, I never knew.

And that's the little gentle warning. If you've heard this, then you know. And today, you too must choose to come on in.

Of Acts, Dr. Luke tells us, go and first get reacquainted with Jesus. We got into Luke, we looked at the opening chapters, and we have seen all about Jesus over years.

And this morning, as we have delved in, God has come for transformation of people's lives that was taking place during those first years of earth.

[19 : 28] And so as we seek to go forward into the next stage of Jesus, his baptism, his explosive work, let's first pause here and take the disciples of Jesus here at this church this morning.

We must fully and our eyes on Jesus now, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your personal life, and do whatever needs done to get you closer and closer to Jesus.

Be very diligent. Read the Bible through and through. Read the Gospels over and over. Spend as much time and sorts of things to get closer and closer to him. Take a good bird's eye view of your life.

See what needs increased, what needs decreased. Make your ambition as big as Simeon's, as big as from day one. I've always said my one ultimate main ambition is to be as close whilst on this earth.

Obviously being in heaven with him is the closest I can get, but until then, whilst I want to get as close as I possibly, possibly can.

[20 : 42] Shall we do this together? Can we spare each other on, put each other accountable, support each other, encourage each other, help one another, do this, get as close to Jesus as we possibly, possibly can.

Let's decide with only angels. Don't be content to just see a star. Don't be like the shepherd and go and find him.

Be like the wise men, spend as long as his laundry. Ask him right into your heart. Be like Matthew, give up all and get help.

God rewards those who seek him. Not those who know doctrine, who know religion, who know many settle for lesser passions like that. But the reward goes to less than Jesus himself.

And what's the reward? Nothingness and the relationship with your creator. Being like Jesus. Jesus have no guilt. God will remove you.

[21 : 52] God will end you. Jesus have no fear of death. God will make you fearless. Jesus was lovely, gentle, old, you likewise. Luke's biography of Jesus begins exploding arrival of Jesus.

It presents us with the amazing encounters of people finding Jesus and know him. So let's make the same, let's take the same message, that same vibe, to know Jesus even better.

Rearranging our lives to make sure we have more of him in it. And that's our kingdom work here. Our new vision, our work ahead, will be in the chapters in Luke's gospel.

But it will only begin with us on our knees, George, and keeping our eyes fully and firmly fixed on him. Let's pray.

Lord, Lord, here's the play of our heart. We're looking to be as close to you as we possibly can.

[23 : 03] We pray that we all, Lord, take time to remove what needs gone from our end of what needs in our lives. And we get together with a fellowship of believers as we look forward to your future plans, Lord, here in Wester Hills.

Jesus, we love you, we worship you. This morning, lead us not continuously in your good name, Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Do join us this evening for Wednesday night as we begin to think about evangelism and vision and what Jesus is doing.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witness, let us throw off everything, everything that hinders so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race mark, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.