

*"...about my Fathers Business."*



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**Matthew 2:13-23, Luke 2:40-52**

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Matthew 2:13-23 *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." When he arose, he took the young Child and His*

*mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more." But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."*

Luke 2:40-52 *And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

In the 1990's, in the US and beyond, there arose the popularity of bracelets that said W.W.J. D., acronym for 'what would Jesus do.' Sadly, it reflected an "open season" on just what Jesus *would* do...according to our personal interpretation of the person and character of Jesus, which frankly we culturally and educationally rarely have any true idea. Let's face it. It's a whole lot easier to imagine what Jesus *would* do rather than what He *actually* did, and certainly more palatable.

From the beginning of His life, Jesus was fairly nomadic. His heavenly Father intervened on numerous occasions to keep Him alive, for from His birth the enemies of Jesus seemed to lurk around every corner. It's interesting that God sent Christ here with one grand assignment and that was to die. Yet it would be in God's own timing, never that of His enemies. But Jesus indeed had His assignment. A destiny. A purpose. Just as every one of us. The path of knowing what that is for each of us is being in tune with what Jesus did instead of a skewed idea of what He *would* do.

1 John 2:6 tells us plainly “*Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.*” Whoever. That would certainly be all of us. Does this mean we should don sandals and a robe and gypsy around the country? I don’t think so. The language calls us to walk in the *way* that He walked...not in the clothes and the style that He walked. But before we dance away from the precipice, we are compelled to ask the question: “*how did He walk?*” The answer to that question encompasses issues of priority, faithfulness, consistency, cultural awareness, and sheer determination. There was great love and compassion. There was the honest counselor, the faithful servant, the dedicated leader. How can we ever really understand the magnitude of the gospel and the cross if we fail to grasp the nature of the one who brought it to us?

Our text herein bears testimony of effectually 30 years of Jesus life. It’s all we have from roughly His birth to the beginning of His earthly public ministry. He did not therefore deem it necessary to cover secondary and temporal issues like what sports he played in high school and his adventures at summer camp! All the things one does and decides for his or her life in those thirty years...all of it was secondary and overshadowed by one thing...one attitude...one priority that skewed everything in his life. Every decision, every move, every activity, and every desire He had. It all quite simply came down to this: “*I must be about my Father’s business.*” Some versions say “*I must be in my Father’s house.*” Both are correct translations from the original language. Perhaps because they tend to be the same principle.

Please note what it does *not* say. It does not say that He needed to be about the study of God, the history of the Godhead, the philosophies of spirituality, or put a Jesus fish on your car, even if all that stuff are great pursuits. It says nothing about political activity, nothing about climbing the corporate ladder or a house in the ‘burbs or a cabin and boat on the lake... that’s the *world’s* business. Are these things sin? Maybe. That is ultimately between you and the Master, but no where are these things specific things spelled out as overt sin! But are they truly “the Father’s business?” Or are they *our* business? Matthew 6:33 calls upon us to “*...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*” And what things shall be added? All the rest of the stuff . That passage speaks of food, drink, clothing, and such. The stuff we need to live that He says He already knows about.

Ahhh...*we need some clarity here!* Ok, what about 1 Corinthians 10:31 which says “***whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.***” And Colossians 3:17 “***...whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.***” Colossian 3:23 “***And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord.***” So we can gather that there is an “all-encompassing” aspect to this, is all that we do.

Notice too, that the faithful pursuits of Jesus herein did not seem to please mom and step-dad. One could certainly argue the case that Jesus *was only 12 years old!* But I am here to tell you that the reality is your folks may *never* approve of your life pursuits if they are focused around the furthering of God’s kingdom business. No sir. Too dangerous, too risky financially, cuts into the “making of grandkids”, and tends to keep you from coming home on the holidays (and the other weekends too). Many of you have already experienced this phenomenon! Generally, they won’t totally reject your faith nor will they seek to trample your pursuits all-together. It usually revolves around the *level* of commitment. This, of course, is the modern approach to “all things God.” You know how it goes: “*it’s ok to go to church and even be involved some. But hey! Moderation here! You don’t have to get crazy or fanatical about it! I mean, you still need to have a life. You need to have some security in a career. You still have a family here...remember that!*”

Interesting. What exactly IS a fanatic? The dictionary renders it as follows: *a person with an extreme and uncritical enthusiasm or zeal*. Ummm...wouldn't that make Jesus a fanatic according to this passage and the rest of His historical account? And if I am to be like Jesus, where does that leave me? My own parents raised me intensely for Christ, and they were thrilled that I loved Him dearly, but I still don't think they were especially pleased that I became a pastor and that my life path took me away from weekends at home and often into 3<sup>rd</sup> world environments which they saw as dangerous. And of course, having 3 of us kids in the ministry just poured gas onto the fire!

So the family, the extended friends, as well as many others, are quite likely to try to get you to tone it down and find a comfortable level of service and commitment. I'm not trying to mess with your greater family dynamic. You should seek to lovingly participate in your family throughout your life whenever and however possible. But the fact remains...there will always be those who want you to operate your life in gray mode. *Don't get crazy about stuff...don't over reach or over commit. Participate but don't risk. Involve yourself but don't join the team*. And that overriding thinking is what has caused us to be a milktoast society. Marriages fall apart because we are unwilling to go "all-in"...parenting fails because we want kids AND career, money, toys, and "me-time," ...we become a "mile wide and an inch deep." Tacitly knowledgeable in much and expert in nothing!

It is interesting to see what was priority then when today it is school sports and so many other minor and temporal matters for a kid growing up; *And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him*.

Ellicotts Commentary for English Readers says the following about "my Father's business.": —*Literally, in the things that are My Father's—i.e., in His work, the vague width of the words covering also, perhaps, the meaning "in My Father's house," the rendering adopted in the old Syriac version. The words are the first recorded utterance of the Son of Man, and they are a prophecy of that consciousness of direct Sonship, ... which is afterwards the dominant idea of which His whole life is a manifestation. We find in a Gospel ... the germ of what there comes out so fully in such words as, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I also work" (John 5:17), "I and My Father are One" (John 10:30).*

If we fail to grasp just what the "business of the Father" is, then we can't really be expected to "be about it". Jesus said to his disciples after the resurrection, in John 20 verse 21: "*As the Father sent me, so I send you*". Our Father is all about the restoration of His family, and spiritual fellowship. Such encompasses both a growing and learning process, and this will continue for us throughout our lifetime. Yes, we must continue to grow in our knowledge of God, but to "be about His business" would also compel us also to action. Being in school is not the same as actually engaging in business pursuits. We must actually love, serve, engage in Christian fellowship and reach out in missional interaction with the lost world around us.

All the while we do so, the darkness will attempt to distract us, delay us, discourage us and foster compromise and excuses. Satan will do his best to bring bondage, enslavement, hurt, pain, sickness, death and hardness of heart by whatever means he can, purely out of hatred for God and a hatred for you. The work of Jesus included the destruction of the works of the devil. "*For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil*" (1 John 3:8). Part of "Our Father's Business" then is the proactive battle against the Satan, and that is generally messier and more time consuming than mere church attendance.

Galatians 5:17 reminds us that *"The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions."* So to actually be about the Father's business means so often that I must lay down my own will in exchange for the "kingdom business." It did for Jesus. He said, *"I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent me"*. The fact is that God's purpose for our lives is often different than what we want in the flesh...situations where we would perhaps rather indulge our self-interests or run from the demanding implications of His leading.

To pursue the business of God we are going to need to say "No" to ourselves on a daily basis and instead make ourselves available to God. Often too, we need to stop thinking about all the ways we could make money and pursue earthly career and status and surrender it all at the feet of Jesus. This does not mean we shouldn't work a secular job or provide for our family commitments, (quite the contrary) but do we trust Jesus to provide for our earthly needs? Is our vocation also our mission field? Do we realize that *"God knows we need all these things, before we even ask?"* (Matthew 6:8) Do we stand in true manifest belief of 1Corinthians 2:9: *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

*"At one point in Exodus 33 it seems God grew weary of the Israelites doubting His provision, and He told Moses to take them on to the Promised Land. God promised to provide an angel to go before them and drive out the "ites" from before them, but God was not going to continue with them as the pillar of cloud and fire. But Moses refused to go anywhere that the Presence of God did not precede them. What impressed me was the fact that Moses did not want a map ... he wanted a guide. Moses wanted the Presence of the Lord to be his Guide".*  
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John 12:26 says *"Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me."* To "be about my Father's business" means that first He IS my Father truly, and secondly that I am wherever He is working." It does not mean seeking to 'make something happen for God in the place and way you have decided.' For that would make God about **your** business. I wonder how many of can really say...when the world questions our life and priorities..."why would you ask that? Do you not know I must be about my Father's business?"