

1. Last Sunday our subject was Faith. Public or private?
2. We said there is this unwritten rule that many of us have grown up with and that is this.
3. If you want to avoid hard feelings or conflict in a group setting, it's best to not talk about politics or religion.
4. Why is that? Because religion and politics are usually subjects that are born out of deep beliefs and convictions. And how many know that everybody in our world doesn't have the same beliefs and convictions.
5. Not all of us here today have the same beliefs and convictions. It's just the way humanity is.
6. So, in our world today if we are wise, we choose to stay away from subjects dealing with religion or politics.
7. But what about faith? Should we stay away from the subject of faith?
8. You might wonder, well pastor I thought that's what religion was. Isn't religion and faith the same thing?
9. Well, I don't believe it is. Religion has been described as a specific fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a number of people.
10. Religion is made up of beliefs that people generally agree on. Interestingly enough, those beliefs don't even have to center around God.
11. That gives us some great insight into why bringing up religion is so dangerous. Because as we said earlier everybody doesn't believe the same thing.
12. Faith however is different. Faith has been described as the trust in God and in His promises as made through Christ and the Scriptures by which humans are justified or saved.
13. I think what makes faith different from religion is the fact that faith is much more personal. My faith, your faith, describes what Jesus Christ has done for us personally by our acceptance of him as Lord and savior.
14. Now. I want to take a sidebar for a few moments. That last thing I want to communicate is that somehow deeply held convictions, beliefs, practices, and doctrine are not necessary.
15. I'm convinced that deeply held convictions, beliefs, practices, and doctrines are absolutely necessary.
16. It's been said if you don't stand for something you will fall for anything.
17. So, I'm not suggesting that we have to choose between what we believe and our faith experience with Jesus.

18. What I want to communicate is that as it relates to our public life, our relating, especially to unbelievers, there is great wisdom in focusing on our relationship with Jesus first, rather than our beliefs and convictions first.
19. You and I can think a lot of different ways about a lot of different stuff, but there is one thing that is universal. A relationship with Jesus Christ is the foundation for any life of faith.
20. Jesus declared in John 14:6 "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
21. There is an old song that has been playing continually in my mind for the past several days.
22. What I love about this song is that it is very apparent that this song teaches a doctrine or a strong belief. And the belief is that Jesus is alive and not dead.
23. But the method for communicating that belief focuses on our relationship with Jesus.
24. The title of the song is... He Lives.
25. I serve a risen Saviour, He's in the world today  
I know that He is living, whatever men may say  
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer  
And just the time I need Him He's always near
26. He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!  
He walks with me and talks with me  
Along life's narrow way  
He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart!  
You ask me how I know He lives?  
He lives within my heart.
27. The message is Jesus is alive. He rose from the dead and he is alive.
28. How do I know he is alive? I know he is alive because I am distinctly aware of his involvement in my day-to-day life.
29. I see his hand of mercy. I hear his voice. When I need him, he is there? He walks with me and he talks with me. You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart.
30. I love this approach. The writer of this song could have stated over and over again that Jesus is alive and quoted scripture and declared I am right, and you are wrong. But all he would have gotten was an argument.
31. But by focusing on the impact of Jesus in his life, it changes the tone completely.

32. That leads us into today's message. By focusing on faith, it opens up the door for us to cooperate with the will of our heavenly father.

**TEXT:** **Luke 2:43-49** After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." 49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

**TITLE:** **Found**

**INTRO:**

1. I can understand how it happened, but I still can't help but chuckle when I read this story about Jesus when he was a boy.
2. Even though Jesus was and is the son of God, we find him in circumstances and situations that resemble something we might go through on a normal basis.
3. Jesus family, and probably his extended family, friends, and neighbors all travel to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. The Passover feast was a celebration of when the death angel passed over the homes of the Israelites in Egypt and didn't kill their first-born male.
4. This feast was an annual occurrence and so the family probably had traveled this way at this time of the year quite often.
5. It probably had become commonplace to them and so they didn't stress about their coming and going.
6. In all of the hustle and bustle however Jesus parents did what almost every parent has probably done. They accidently left Jesus in Jerusalem. What is most eye catching to me is the amount of time Jesus was left alone in Jerusalem.
7. Verse 44 says Jesus parents traveled for about a day's journey before they realized he was missing. That means they had to travel back another day. Then they searched for Jesus for three more days before they finally found him. All together Jesus was missing for 5 days. A 12-year-old boy left alone for 5 days.
8. I guess it's a good thing this story didn't happen in our culture today. Jesus would have been taken from his parents.

9. I'm ashamed to admit, but when the kids were young, one evening my wife and I left church in separate vehicles.
10. I thought she had Matt with her, and she thought I had Matt with me. When we got home and realized neither of us had Matt, we went into a panic.
11. Fortunately, when we sped back to the church, we found him asleep on a pew and he was none the wiser.
12. Again, I love the candor of the bible. Next, Mary basically scolds Jesus. Why have you done this to us? Don't you know we have been looking for you?
13. Jesus response however set his mother's mind at ease. I don't believe Jesus responded with an attitude. I don't believe he was rebellious, but with the authority of the Son of God he says to her in Luke 2:49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"
14. The King James Version says Luke 2:49 wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?
15. In other words, didn't you know that I would be taking care of my father's business?
16. What is exciting about Jesus is that even at a young age he knew what his purpose was. He knew that he had an assignment. He knew that he had been sent with an agenda.
17. That agenda, that plan, that purpose and that assignment was to be about his father's business. To take care of God's business. That's why Jesus says in John 4:34 "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."
18. Then again in John 8:29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."
19. I believe one of the greatest realizations we can come to, after recognizing that we need Jesus as savior, is that we have all been called to take care of the father's business.
20. If we know Jesus as savior then as individual believers our assignment is to take care of the father's business.
21. What was the business of Jesus father? Now we know the business of Jesus earthly father was that of a carpenter, but that wasn't what Jesus was referring to, Jesus was referring to his heavenly father. The business of his heavenly father, besides listening, learning, and asking questions in the temple was people. The business of the heavenly father was the salvation of people.
22. That's why John 3:16 that golden verse of the bible describes the role and purpose of Jesus coming to earth when it says that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

23. The business of the father was in bringing life to the world.
24. Now, I recognize that there are many roles we could fill in the building of God's kingdom, but none is more important than that of bringing life to a lost world.
25. I don't know about you but when Jesus returns to earth again I want him to find me carrying out my father's business. What joy we will experience if when Jesus returns he finds us taking care of the father's business.
26. This morning I want to share with you three aspects of the father's business.
27. The first aspect of the father's business.

## Loving People

1. The first part of John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.
2. The world he was talking about here was not the planet, not the stars, trees, mountains, and valley's, he was talking about the people.
3. For God so loved the people of the world that he gave his one and only son.
4. Notice that it doesn't specify what people. It doesn't say that he only loved those who like us and that he doesn't love those who hate us.
5. It doesn't matter if they are male or female, young or old, what color they are, what culture they are from, whether they are moral or immoral.
6. It doesn't matter if they smell good or stink, if they are tall or short, intelligent, or ignorant, whether they are deserving or not, God loves them. His business is loving people. And if his business is loving people then that makes loving people our business.
7. Now, no one ever said that loving people, especially lost people would be easy.
8. Jesus was teaching his disciples after the sermon on the mount and he had this to say about loving our enemies. Matthew 5:43-47 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor<sup>[8]</sup> and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you: Love your enemies<sup>[9]</sup> and pray for those who persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?
9. How many understand that is a tough teaching. Loving those who love us and make us feel good is one thing but loving those who we know don't love us that is hard.
10. Loving lost people who don't understand, who have habits that may repulse us, who may look and act in a way that is strange to us, that is hard.

11. The bible doesn't teach us to love what these people do, but he does command us to love the person just the same.
12. If we are to be about the father's business we have to somehow separate what people do from who they are to Jesus. And who they are is special to God.
13. The first aspect of our father's business is loving people. The second aspect of the father's business is.

## Serving People

1. Philippians 2:1-8 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature<sup>[1]</sup> God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature<sup>[2]</sup> of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!
2. I have to tell you it is hard for me to read that passage of scripture without wanting to cry. To think that Jesus was in heaven, the son of God. Sitting at the right hand of the almighty.
3. He was and is the second person of the trinity. He is all powerful and all knowing. In him is every good thing. But this good, powerful, all knowing awesome being didn't make the aim of his life to be equal with God, he made the aim of his life to make himself nothing, to take on the nature of a servant, to be humble and to be obedient even to the point of death.
4. I can't help but read that passage of scripture and want to get on my knees before God.
5. The business of the father is in serving and putting others before ourselves.
6. In Jesus case the very ones he humbled himself for accused him and abused him and crucified him.
7. I must admit sometimes I don't understand the ways of God, but what I see here is that the father's business is one of self-sacrifice, humility, and service to others.
8. The business of the father is in being a busboy if you will to the lost of humanity.
9. While we are joint heirs with Jesus. While we are due the inheritance of sons and daughters God calls us to be humble servants rather than high ranking officials.

10. I have said and I will continue to say, I don't want a position, I don't want a title, I don't want to be somebody, I don't want to be the presbyter or leader of our section of churches, I don't want to be the superintendant of the state, not that there is anything wrong with those who hold those positions.
11. My aspiration is not to be somebody important; my aspiration is to be a nobody that points people to Jesus.
12. I want to be about my father's business of serving others.
13. The third aspect of the father's business is...

## Reconciling people

1. The word **reconcile**: To reestablish a close relationship between. Another way of saying reconcile is to restore back to closeness.
2. In talking about the need for reconciliation the Apostle Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5:18-21** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **20** We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. **21** God made him who had no sin to be sin<sup>[1]</sup> for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
3. What we find here is that the business of the father is in reconciling, or reestablishing people to right relationship with himself. His business is the business of taking what was once broken and restoring it back to a place of functionality.
4. His business is that of taking that which was once dead and making it come to life again. His business is that of taking what was once unhealthy and making it healthy. The father's business is reconciliation.
5. In verse 20 it tells us that we are Christ's ambassadors. In other words, Christ's agents. Our role then, our function in the business of God, according to this passage is to reconcile, or to help people establish or reestablish a close relationship with God.
6. In other words, we are the tools in God's hands, we are the conduit through which God restores and brings mankind back into right relationship with himself.
7. I don't know about you but that thought scares me just a little. That means my life can either bring people closer to God or it can cause them to want to have nothing to do with God. My life, our life can either bring connection to Christ or disconnection from Christ.
8. That makes the fathers business pretty important.

## Conclusion:

1. I remember as a teenager my dad giving me a job to do one summer. We were building a new set of stalls to house pigs in. There was a lot of painting to be done and my dad assigned me the job.
2. Of course, I procrastinated and didn't do what I had been told to do. I remember him coming home that day from a hard day's work and asking me if I had finished the job he had assigned.
3. I said no. I will never forget the look he gave me. He didn't yell, he didn't scream he just looked at me with a look of disappointment, turned and started painting.
4. I will never forget that look of disappointment. I wish he had given me a spanking, it would have been less painful.
5. I don't know about you, but I don't ever want my heavenly father to give me that look. I want to take care of his business. I want to be about my father's business.
6. What a great business God has called us to. What a fulfilling business God has called us to. There is no greater joy than knowing we made a difference in the life of one of God's own.
7. How many would say this morning I want to be about my father's business?
8. I believe we all do. We must.
  - a. Love people
  - b. Serve people
  - c. Reconcile people
9. Over the past year our nation, our state, our community, and in some cases churches have been divided by all the things going on in our world.
10. Between pandemics and presidential elections and all of the stresses they have caused, it can become very easy to lose sight of what really matters. And that's the father's business.
11. What's most important is not that we all hold the same beliefs about a million and one different things. What is most important is that our relationship with Jesus Christ compels us to be about the business that our heavenly father has for us.
12. Prayer.
13. Lord, help us to get our focus and our attention back on what matters most to you.
14. Salvation call.