

LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOUR RICHLY • LUKE 2.41-52 & COLOSSIANS 3.12-17

What movie or TV show or book have you put yourself in as one of the characters?

As I have an over active imagination – I enjoy imagining being the characters in the stories.

Even as an adult it's fun to do this – we watched Aqua man the other night - it was great

I'm not about to try breathing under water – but there are truths I could take away

In particular Aqua man had to learn his kingship wasn't about being worthy but whether he was willing to sacrifice everything for others – there are truths we learn through stories

The other Sunday I said if we found reading the bible difficult then we're reading it wrong.

This is because we aren't putting ourselves into the story – as God spoke to his children back then – so God speaks through his living Word to reveal his truths to us today

A few key points – remember these are recorded events of what Jesus life - however - certain things are highlighted for those who were the first to receive these letters

The writers aren't thinking – I wonder what the Lakes Anglican church will make of this?

Luke is writing a historical and theological work for the Roman Theophilus – he wants to give an accurate account of Jesus who has just turned their world on its head.

Let's run through a few key points as we run through Luke 2:

Vs 41: Luke stresses how devout and law-abiding Jesus' parents were.

Vs 42: The 12th year was the final year of preparation for a lad before he entered full participation in the religious life of the synagogue.

Up until that time his parents were teaching him the commandments of the law, but at the end of the 12th year the child goes through a ceremony by which he formally takes on the yoke of the law and becomes a bar mitzvah or "son of the commandment."

Vs 43, 44: Imagine driving from here to Tamworth - realizing you left your child and having to drive back again. Only you're walking.

As John Piper picks up – there's an inconsistency here. First, Jesus seems to have a disregard for his parents' time and feelings. Second, Mary and Joseph trusted their son.

We might be tempted to think of Jesus as a 12-year-old child from today.

That's like comparing a 19-year-old today with one 70 years ago – my grandfather was leading a battalion of soldiers at 19 and we were sending 15-year-old kids into war.

Like any story – knowing context helps us get more out of what we read, see or hear.

Jesus was close to being considered a man even though we see him addressed as a child.

His parents wouldn't go a day without knowing where he was if they didn't trust him

It's plausible Jesus' motive in staying behind wasn't about carelessness or disrespect.

It's plausible he intentionally chose to let them go to demonstrate he was aware God had something greater for him - to learn what this was - he had to choose to be in God's house.

Vs 43–46: It's hard to imagine three days searching in Jerusalem as it would seem obvious that Jesus and his parents would have simply gone back to the same place they had stayed while in Jerusalem. Even back in 1st century times I think the rule of

Vs 46, 47: This is such a beautiful picture and one I desperately pray for our church

It's a picture of the young choosing to listen and learn from their senior church members

It's a picture of the elders choosing to share the wisdom of their faith and scriptures

It's a picture of a community recognising the value of (a) choosing to learn and know God's word and (b) choosing to share that with each other.

One stimulates a deeper engagement with the other – learning and knowing is developed to a greater degree when shared – sharing develops a desire to learn and know more.

Vs 48 – 50: Unfortunately, Mary and Joseph's reaction will be a similar scene 18 years later

It will be the picture of perhaps some of these very same teachers who will gnash their teeth at Jesus wisdom and want to kill him. Those who will not understand his words.

Vs 51 – 52: here is verses 39-40 reiterated again – strong, wise – full of God's favour

Jesus could have grown up in the temple. The religious leaders could have taken him in as a protégé – but Jesus went back to Nazareth – and took over the family business

Yet he remained unique - he grew in spiritual maturity and relationship with others – even though he would have been surrounded by a community questioning his original birth

In the midst of adversity – he chose to grow strong and wise in his faith – which brought about God's favour in his relationship with God - and with those around him

With 2019 on our doorstep, my mind goes in a couple of directions as I thought about what God might want to say through today's sermon:

What does our church need to prepare for? What people and ministries need attention?

What is God's heart for those in our church and those who will come?

What choices can I help place before you that as opportunities to help you develop spiritual strength, wisdom, faith and grow in God's favour?

This is today's truth – spiritual development is about an intentional choice to grow.

If we want 2019 to be a year of emotional, mental, physical and spiritual strength, wisdom, faith and see ourselves and each other grow in God's favour – we must be intentional

Our second reading picks this point up in the community at Colossae who were encouraged, in Paul's words in verse 16 - 17:

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

In the midst of serving the people of this church and the wider community, I have to consciously and consistently make a choice to serve God – this is my heart

It's my heart as I go into the community on behalf of our church

It's my heart as I prepare sermons and services that draw us together - we build each other's spiritual strength, wisdom, faith

It's my heart to encourage you for when you go back to our communities – praying God's favour transforms you – that we might all transform those around us

You see – like Aqua man – he had to learn his true identity – not the one he was burdened with by himself and others as not good enough for one world or the other

Paul says today – you are God's chosen ones – holy and beloved – do you know this truth? How does this truth change the way you think about yourself and how you treat others?

Aqua man used his poor self-image to act *less than* who he was called to be – to not make tough choices – to humble himself - to care more for others – he learnt a tough lesson

Paul says today - clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience - bear with one another - forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you.

And above all - clothe yourselves with love – love binds everything together in perfect harmony - let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts - you are called to be one body

What is God saying to you today? What choices do you need to make going into 2019?

I don't know what 2019 will bring – but here's a final thought...

If it is true that Christ built his life on God's word – which enabled him to grow in spiritual strength, wisdom, faith and favour with God and people – then I want that – do you?

Perhaps our New Year's resolution might simply be – as a church community - to choose to learn, know and share - with each other – God's word – and see what happens...

Let's pray ...