

Follow God Wholeheartedly

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon calls for parents to wholeheartedly teach their children to follow God's ways, using Jesus' early life as a model for spiritual growth and responsibility.

Duration: 58:18

Scripture: Luke 2:41

Topics: "Following God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a true story about an Anglican minister in England who had a terrifying dream about judgment day. The minister found himself alone before the Lord and was questioned about the whereabouts of his congregation members. This story serves as a warning to the listeners about the importance of leading others to God and fulfilling their responsibilities as pastors and ministers. The preacher also emphasizes the role of parents in teaching their children the right path and warns about the consequences of neglecting this duty.

Transcript

We ask you, Lord, to be with us. Take this service into your hands. Amen.

Today I'd like to speak about our Lord as He was growing up on this earth and He was 12 years old. And that we find in Luke chapter 2. And from verse 41 to 55. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

And when He was 12 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.

Let's have a closer look at this now. And this applies very much to children. So you young people listen carefully.

This is for you. But you parents, you listen carefully too. Because very often children go off the track, they're on the wrong road.

And if you go into it, you find that the problem actually lies with the parents because they haven't taught their children properly. Especially parents that are a little, so to say, higher up, who have achieved something in life, they very often are the ones that have children that are a real problem. So this portion applies very much to young people, but also to parents who have the responsibility to bring up their children properly.

As the Bible says, teach your child in the way it should go, in His way. And when the child grows up, it will not deviate from it. Dear parents, dear mothers here, if you teach your child when it's young and it's still small to walk in God's way, when it's older, the Bible says it will not deviate from it.

That's why it's often the parents' fault that the children get onto the wrong way. Very often parents complain, they say, oh the children are such a problem, they don't want to listen. All the time the problem lies with the parents.

Look in the world today, just look what the children are like. And you can't blame poverty for it and say, oh it's because they are having such a tough time. No, usually those are better off.

It's the ones that have so to say achieved something in life that are better off. Very often you hear in the world today, people say, oh it's this poverty that causes all these problems. That's not true.

If you find both parents faithfully serving the Lord, invariably the child will follow in the parents' footsteps. And don't be offended if I just tell you the truth as it is. You can bring up your child the way you think, but as the Germans say, when you die, they will be the one that hit the last nail into that coffin.

They will be the one that hit the last nail into that coffin. Look in the world today, just look what the children are like. And you can't blame poverty for it and say, oh it's because they are having such a tough time.

But then you young people, you children, if you are the ones that are driving your parents into the grave and you basically, you kill them, you are murderers, you are guilty of their death. The Bible says, honour father and mother so it may go well with you and that you may live long on this earth. Many people die when they are still young and if you look at it, you find that it's because they haven't honoured their parents.

But now let's look at this child, Jesus. He was 12 years old at this time and they had this tradition that they always went up to the feast in Jerusalem. Now the Jews have a tradition that a child that's 12 years old is, you could say, confirmed already.

So that child is starting to be recognised already among the older people as one who can think for itself. Now Joseph and Mary, it was their habit to always go up to the feast in Jerusalem, especially the feast of

There was a boy whose mother was a widow. And the boy always came to the mother and said, mother, can I have five cents? In those days, five cents was worth quite a lot. You could buy a carton of beer with it.

And the boy would plead with the mother and beg just for five cents. The mother would complain and say, but you're always just begging for money and why do you always ask for money? And then he'd just keep on pleading and eventually the mother would give her money. And he'd tell the mother that he's going to the shop to buy some bread or a bun or cake or something like that.

All the time he was on his way to the bottle store to buy some beer. And then one day he fell ill and he was on his deathbed. And while he was on his deathbed, he called his mother.

He said to his mother, please just come a bit closer. I want to tell you something. And she got closer and closer.

He said, come even closer. Put your ear right next to my mouth. I want to tell you something.

And when she was close, he suddenly bit off a piece of her ear. And he said, And then he said, mother, I'm on my way to hell. I'm dying and I'm on my way to hell.

But it's your fault. It's because you always kept giving me that money, which I was using not to buy a bun, but to buy beer. Woe to us if our children are busy deceiving us and we don't have the discernment to see it.

You need to be strict. You need to be strict. Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants, you have ordained strength because of your enemies that you may silence the enemy and the avenger.

So God has ordained that children should bring honor and praise to God. Now, it doesn't mean that you must treat your children, mistreat them. In fact, the Bible says that if you cause a child to stumble, it would be better if a millstone were tied around your neck.

And you'll be thrown into the deepest part of the sea. So we can't take it lightly. So we need to bring up a child according to God's word and teach it God's word that we can together go to heaven.

We need to bring up a child according to God's word and teach it God's word that we can together go to heaven. So here we see how this couple, the mother and Joseph, were taking their child to the service. They took their child to the service whether it was raining, whether it was cold or hot.

They made sure the child got to the service. And they didn't miss a single opportunity. They would go up to be there at that service, at that feast.

Now, when they were returning from the temple, from the feast on their way home, They traveled for a whole day and they didn't notice that Jesus was not in their midst. They just jumped to the conclusion that he was with their relatives or with their friends. They were walking.

They were on foot. They didn't have a coach or a taxi. They had to walk.

So that was the rule for them. When there was a service, they were meant to be there. So now we will see this child in the temple.

So after they traveled for a whole day, a whole day's journey, they looked for the child and didn't find this 12-year-old boy. And Mary said to Joseph, maybe we must just return to Jerusalem. Maybe he got left behind there.

After three days, they found him in the temple. Not on the street. Not at the football match.

You go to the football match. You go and watch soccer. Your children go and play soccer, but they don't go to the service.

After three days, they found him there in the temple among the teachers there and all the preachers. He was both listening and asking them questions. He wasn't just sitting there in the temple counting the lights or counting the beams in the roof.

No, he was attentively listening to what the teachers were saying. What are your children like when you sit with them in a service? So there they found him sitting among the teachers, the professors of theology. This obviously also shows that this was as a result of his upbringing.

The way that his mother and how Joseph taught him and brought him up. So Mary and Joseph went to him and Mary said, my child, what have you done to us? We've been looking for you for three days. Everyone that was there was astonished about what they were experiencing through this child.

But the parents, they get there and they find fault with the child. The teachers there in the temple were amazed at the insight this child had and the questions that he was asking. This is very much in contrast to what many young people are like today and children are like, who are directly cheeky to their parents.

They have no respect. They ask cheeky questions and have cheeky comments that you never expect from a child. This is very much in contrast to what many young people are like today and children are like, who are directly cheeky to their parents.

This is very much in contrast to what many young people are like today and children are like, who are directly cheeky to their parents. I have a lot of respect for Mary but here she disappoints me the way she went about this. She goes there, she said, son, look, your father and I have been looking for you now for three days.

This was not Jesus' father after all but here this is the way she approaches and saw it. But he quickly corrected her and reminded her of who he actually was. When he said, do you seek me? Why do you seek me? Do you know that I must be about my father's business? Reminding her who his real father is.

So I have a lot of respect for Mary but here she disappoints me. And if you are Catholic you must excuse me that I speak like that about Mary. And thus she said a stupid thing.

Of course she never told him that Joseph wasn't his father but she underestimated him. He knew who his father was and it wasn't just the stepfather of hers. But then it goes on to say that they, Mary and Joseph, did not understand the statement which he spoke to them.

She did a good thing that she kept it in her heart but she didn't understand it. It's a pity that we do not understand so many things. They didn't understand.

He said, do you not realize I must be about my father's business, my real father? But then he got up and went with them. Went home with them. He came to Nazareth with them and an amazing word which we

read now is that he was subject to them.

Even though he did not agree with them or understand them in this, yet he was subject to them. Even if you think you know more or know better than your parents or your mother, but you should learn that you need to be subject to them and that you need to respect her. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and men.

He was an amazing person. You young people learn from Jesus. James is saying that we should be an example to others in our conduct.

And how we live and as we follow the Lord. So let us learn also to be an example and even in the way we honor and respect our parents. So Jesus was there helping in the home, cleaning, doing the dishes, helping the father in his work until the time came for him to start his ministry.

Young people, do you follow in Jesus' footsteps? Do you live the life he lived? And you parents, do you teach your children and maybe even your grandchildren, and bring them up in the way that Jesus taught us and the way he was? Times up. What do you parents say? Regarding the way you bring up your children? What do you feed them? Do you feed them heavenly milk? Nowadays many parents have to bury their own children. Why? Because you didn't teach that child God's way.

You just let that child go and it went the ways of the world and went to destruction there. You've got children, maybe you've got grandchildren. When you enter heaven, will you enter heaven with them or without them? You've got children, maybe you've got grandchildren.

When you enter heaven, will you enter heaven with them or without them? I'm always happy when another grandchild arrives, but then I also have the question and say, where will this child end up? So parents, pray for your children. Lest you say you're going to heaven but your children are being left behind. But remember Jesus also said, if you love father, mother, brother, sister or child more than you love me, you are not worthy of me.

So the Lord Jesus must always be the very first. I remember when I got to Mapumulu, the Copes lived there. He was a businessman.

And I told him about this Anglican minister in England, who had a dream. The next morning, his wife noticed that something was wrong. And the wife said, my husband, is there something wrong? He said, no, there's nothing wrong.

But you know how life can be like a dripping tap that drip, drip, drip. Eventually that soft water makes a hole in concrete. She kept on asking so long, eventually he said, I'll tell you, I had a terrible dream.

In my dream, I found myself on judgment day. It was the day of the Lord and everyone was caught up to meet the Lord in the air. But he says, suddenly I found myself all alone before the Lord.

Before that great white judgment throne. And I was called by my name. And then he said to me, you've been a pastor, minister in four different congregations.

And the Lord said to me, where are those congregation members? The deacons, where are they? The prayer women, where are they? The choirs, the youth choir, where are all those members? And he said, I didn't know what to answer. And he asked me about the first congregation and the second, the third and

the fourth. And then he said to me, where's your wife? Where are your children? Where's your eldest daughter? He had about five or six children.

He said, where are they? And he said, look this side. And as he looked, he saw a big group of people. And he noticed, recognized them as his first congregation.

They were all heading towards a bottomless pit. Nowadays people dance, but that day there will be no dancing. And he said, as they fell into this bottomless pit, they called out, crying.

Heartbreaking cry. And as he saw all those congregation members heading towards the bottomless pit, right at the end he suddenly noticed, he saw his wife. And then his children, all of them, all heading towards this bottomless pit.

He was sitting in his bed as he was telling his wife. And as he told his wife, he said, and God said, there they go and you join them. He says, as he said those words, he fell over backwards in his bed and died.

A true story of an Anglican ministry in England. And dear friend, make sure that you won't join that queue. Jesus will ask, where's your wife, where's your son? Don't say he's got to decide.

He'll want his blood from your hands. Let us not be like that. Dear Anglican minister, let us rather be like Jesus.

Let us pray. Lord may these words not be in vain. We've heard about that child who, even though he was a child, yet he was mature.

Lord we pray on this day that you will soften our hearts and that you will be able to be gracious to us. Amen. One story which I didn't finish, where I was speaking about that brother, Mr. Culp at Mapumulo.

And I told the story of that Anglican minister. After which he got into his car and travelled a long distance to Mporofana. Up the hill, before you go down to Tugela Ferry.

His brother was there who had a shop. And he went to his brother and he said, brother, I've never asked you, are you ready to meet with God? I was in a service. A preacher was preaching.

Where he had told us about that story. Mr. Culp related how he had heard in the service where I told the story of that Anglican priest. And then he said, brother, I've come to ask you, are you ready to meet God? That's as I sat down.

Mr. Culp, That evening he came back late and I asked him where he had been. And he told me the story that he had been far away asking his brother because of that story that I had related. And he went to ask his brother as to how he stood with God.

For he did not want him to join that queue. Shall we pray? Heavenly Father we thank you. Grant that these words will be life changing for each one.

We ask you that you would now part us with your blessing. Amen.

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