

## December 27, 2009 - Luke

One thing about Luke – he doesn't pull any punches.

His gospel is very powerful. And it IS a gospel: a literary genre whose point is to convince the reader that what God did in Jesus changed the world – in fact the whole universe. He writes with passion. He writes with richness of language...  
And he never NEVER lets his readers get comfortable.

Just last week - not even a week ago – we read the glorious story of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. It is written superbly. Telling us by images and hints and outright joyful proclamation  
That this birth in Bethlehem is none other than the birth of God among us.

The One foretold by the prophets.  
The One at whose birth the whole creation sings for joy  
The One who makes human life – flesh and bone and mess and dirt and all of living –  
real human living –  
Makes it holy.

It is a glorious, passionate political personal all encompassing piece of scripture, is the story of Jesus' birth.

And you know what?

Luke never refers to it again in his entire gospel.

AND – as soon as he can, he switches gears.  
Lest we become too comfortable with that baby,  
In case we settle in, to treat Jesus like the infant in the manger, starry-eyed in wonder at the angels' song

Luke says – “if you thought his BIRTH was something –  
You ain't seen nothin' yet!”

Don't get too comfortable – because if you thought you understood him there in Bethlehem, If you thought the entire story had been told in the manger and you understood it and were satisfied and life is going to be great now and you don't need to hear it again 'til next Christmas  
Then hang on  
We're in for a bumpy ride.

And he launches immediately into the one story we have about Jesus' childhood

Does that strike you as odd, by the way? That we have nothing else about his childhood? The 4 gospel writers didn't feel it important, or necessary to tell us about what he was like as a young man? Doesn't that make you go "hmmmm!"??

READ THE TEXT Luke 2: 41-end

It's an uncomfortable story, in some ways, from a human point of view;

Put yourself in the position of those parents.

And Jesus, the 12 year old....acting like

Well

Like a 12 year old.

Totally absorbed in what he's doing, oblivious to the effect his actions had on his parents.

They should have *known* he was ok – *He* knew he was fine! Come on mom and dad – you worry too much!

I like to imagine the conversation on the 3day walk home after that.

Do you think the air was ...a little tense?

Mary, teaching him, with force and deliberation, about God's will including taking other people's feelings into consideration....Joseph explaining that's not how you *do* things, just going off by yourself and not telling anyone where you are....saying something like "you know how we worry"

And Jesus, listening to all that and absorbing their teaching

At the same time balancing that with what he heard from the elders in the temple and his own growing convictions about who he was and what his destiny would be...learning to hear God's call to him

Luke is showing us this man/child

Already growing and breaking the mould.

Already defying convention... and being something other than we might have wanted or expected.

Here he is...pulling away from his family already – those who thought they knew him best. Pulling away from us. Doing things we'd rather he didn't do. Going places we hadn't even thought to look. His family, in a way, is US. And he doesn't always stay in this fold. And we certainly don't own him.

Luke is saying – God's way with this One will not be an easy or comfortable one. Just when you think he's walking with you and your friends, just when you think you've got him pegged, you'll look around and he won't be where you expect. And you'll have to look for him. And it won't be easy – you'll have to travel and it's hard journeying sometimes.

The journey to find him will be your life's work. Like Sarah and Abraham

Like Ruth and Naomi, like the people of God in the wilderness and like the magi who followed the star

You will journey to find him. And when you do

He'll say

I was here all along – doing God's will – didn't you know that? And you'll see him growing in wisdom; Wisdom that was there with God at creation singing and dancing for joy – God's delight – you'll see him growing in Wisdom

And he'll journey with you then

And soon ask you to follow

And the road will lead where you never thought you'd be asked to go

And the searching and the following will be your task and your joy

And it will be enough.