

10:30am Communion Service

With Ben Midgley

Jesus & Passover
Luke 2: 41 - 52

4/01/2026



We could approach this passage in a lot of different ways. We could talk about the folly of searching for Jesus in all the wrong places. Would he be amongst your family and friends? He'd be with his Father. Look there and you'll find him.

Luke repeats the word custom frequently

and he uses it again in verse 41-2. "as was the custom" or ethos. Everybody has a way of living life. Your habits and practices: the things you do and don't do, things you think are right, things you think are wrong, the things you avoid or gravitate to, things that shape and fashion the ethos, the customs of your life. Jesus said, "By their fruits you shall know them". Your heart is a very deep and complex place. Before they were called Christians they were called "followers of the way". The way you live your life, your customs, traditions, practices, habits, your life-style, is often a good indicator of what you really believe and value. The practices of Jesus' family life were deeply godly. They cared about God's word and obedience to it. Faith is the confidence and trust we put in someone and it becomes our sun and we orbit around it by its gravity and power on your life. Godliness is when the living God is the burning sun of your life. The magnetism of his power pulls you in and restores, trains, challenges and moves you. It is in these customs and ways that Jesus grew up. By chapter four we see Jesus as a man who, as was his custom, went into the synagogue and opened the word. The foundations had been laid by the time he was a man. "Train up a child in the way he should go..." With all the scaffolding of his family and community he is living this ethos himself in his own right. He calls the temple something no one else does. He calls it 'his Father's house'. He has grown and matured so that by the time he is twelve he knows what the angels, his parents and neighbours know, that God is his Father. Do you know that living truth of your life, that God is your Father? Are you caught in the orbit of the gravity of God almighty and you are his child? All the peoples of the earth have their beliefs, their gods, their customs and practices so that when the early believers went out into the world their worlds collided so they had to ask, in whom do I put my trust? Their beliefs were put to the test in the cosmos of our believings.

Here we are in 2026! It's important to examine yourselves, to think about the pattern of your life. If your orbit is somewhere out there in space and you want to change (that's a good thing) it is only God who can make that change so it starts with prayer as you realise you can't do it. "Save me and bring me into the covenant, the life and power Jesus Christ, with your people." 2026 is a year for godliness, God-centredness, Godlikeness. Even at this point when Jesus is no longer a child but an adult in his own right and making his own decisions, he chooses to stay behind in Jerusalem. Parents often struggle when their teenagers find a new-found confidence, independence, their own beliefs and convictions with the power to see them through. Sometimes the struggle the kids have is with the struggle the parents are having with their struggle. Jesus is no longer a child. He is a young man with his own personal strong deep conviction of who his Father is and who he is. But he still goes back and is obedient to his parents even after having to basically correct his mother and help her to realise that the limit of her help has been reached. She and Joseph have done a wonderful job. They created a godly atmosphere for him to grow up in. Their relationship continues to endure in that fundamental ethos they had created at home where he grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. How wonderful it is to be in an environment where there is such communal support for those coming into conviction and understanding of their relationship with God as they pray with you, believe in you, help you, sustain you and read the word with you so you realise your potential as a child of God. That is a place where you want to be. We love that verse that

if we lay godly foundations everything is going to be fine but who of us can perfectly train up a child in the way they should go? Mary and Joseph had their limitations and so do we. God our Father is really the only one who can train us up un-warped or distorted. God your Father will get you to the point in the end where you are like Jesus. On that last day when he appears, "we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is." We are all limited. It is God's work in the end. We have to yield to God and hand our friends and families over to him. We need to hand ourselves over to God and realise that, fundamentally, change is inevitable. It is coming whether we like it or not. Mary was anxiously scurrying around searching for Jesus for three days wondering, 'why have you done this to us Jesus?' now she has to step back and think, 'maybe I just need to trust God that everything is changing'. Like it or lump it 2026 is a year of change. Change is coming and we need to step back in true godliness and create an atmosphere where change can happen, people can grow and mature, going further and beyond. Mary's instinct is to rein him back in and control Jesus so he orbits around her needs. She needs to change so she just believes in him.

I have no doubt that as Jesus was being questioned and asking questions on any matter in the Bible that he would have demonstrated the level of genius of his unique gifting that was to perfectly understand the word of God and interpret it, apply it, explain it and teach it in a way that no one ever had been able to do heretofore or ever will. The topic is the Passover and that is deliberate. If you were Jesus growing up in the knowledge of the circumstances of your birth, thinking and meditating on the scriptures and the salvation story of the Passover every year, with the angel passing over so they had life and not death then the lamb must be slain. Blood must be shed. There must be a greater sacrifice, a better lamb, more precious blood so your people will be saved. Think of the growing realisation that that body and blood must be yours. These post-graduate degree men came to realise that this young man knew more about the Passover than they did. He understood more because he realised, "This is me". "This is why I am here." The whole of Matthew 26 (and Mark 14) is dedicated to the Passover and his explanation of the emblematic meal of his broken body and his shed blood. He understood as a twelve year old but at 30 he is showing his disciple more profoundly: this is my blood, this is my body. These things are now fully realised. The whole final third of John's gospel is set in the Passover as Jesus prayed for the oneness of his body. Later Paul crystallises these things when he writes "Jesus is our Passover Lamb. (1Cor 5:7)

The whole of Jesus' life was leading him to this fulfilment of a greater sacrifice, a greater temple, a greater priest so that these things are fulfilled. Would you want to step into his shoes praying in Gethsemane, tasked with the salvation of your people; to be the sacrifice, the Lamb, that your blood should be shed and your body broken? Jesus finds the grace to embrace godly change: to die, to be buried and be raised to eternal life and a whole new creation: a new heaven and a new earth, a new covenant. The power of sin and death are broken forever.

Yes! We need to be godly people and that means we need to be ready to change and to yield but when the change comes we can either take it like Jesus did "Your will be done" "I'm trusting you" or we can fight it all the way. There will be a fight because of the flesh and temptation. We are in the world but let's embrace it and hear what God is saying. There are great things coming in the year to come.