

Devotion by Robert Ching at the Wednesday Prayer Meeting on Mar 14, 2018.

Hidden Years in Nazareth

Lk 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.”

Baptism at River Jordan is considered to be the beginning of public ministry of our Lord Jesus. When God declares to the people ““You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.” What element of Jesus’ life is God well pleased with? George Campbell Morgan, an early 19th century preacher wrote an article called “The Hidden Years at Nazareth”. He believes before Jesus’ public life, God is pleased with the obscure life of Jesus growing up as the carpenter’s son.



Mt 13:⁵⁴ records “When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? ⁵⁵ Is this not the carpenter’s son?” People did not expect a mere carpenter’s son to possess such wisdom.

Yet Jesus spent his formative years in the carpenter’s shop. Joseph apprenticed his earthy son to be a skilled, responsible and diligent carpenter. When Jesus said “For my yoke is easy”, Jesus must be familiar with the making of the joke. It must be fashioned in a way to be most suited, most comfortable for the animal.

Could we also be like Joseph taking a child under our wings? In the old days, a child could grow up in a family business past twelve years old. Today you would be lucky that they are under your influence past kindergarten. But those are the most formative years that you could nurture him for God.

My nine year old grandson sent me a message “Gung-gung, you are lucky because you helped me with my math, I got 2nd place in my class.” Getting lucky is a child’s way of saying that I am blessed. Indeed that was a precious moment when I could help him with math. Then his success gave me the opportunity to remind him of Proverbs 3:6 “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Last Thursday, I was “Mr. Roger” spending the whole morning with a five year old boy, touring the church neighborhood, watching servicemen pulling cables through the street, and running up and down buildings searching for her mom’s office. That age is the most inquisitive and energetic. But it is the time that he is most open to spiritual and moral teachings. I fed him San Ja Ben 山楂餅, and told him to hold on the wrappers until he found a garbage can.

Don’t underestimate the time spent with a child. It may be his most memorable moment and your love and care could impact him for Christ.