

Like Jesus – live as Jesus lived
Spring 2017 Teaching Series - Christ Community Church
Mark Henderson, Pastor of Adult Ministries

BEGIN Like Jesus - *Luke 2:39-52*

Big Idea: To live as Jesus lived, it is vital to begin like Jesus.

I love my dad. I still look up to him, even though he is several inches shorter than I am. In many ways he has been my example for life. He is my example of what it means to be a man, a father, and a husband, to be a neighbor, a boss, and a friend. IF you are around me for very long, you may notice something that I learned from my dad's example. We both believe that everything has a place and everything should be in its place. So, if you can't find something and it isn't in its place, don't blame us. IF we used it last we would have put it back in its place. The answer to your question is, "Yes" we do get in trouble for that attitude – even if we are right 80-90% of the time. I am my father's son. **What about you? How do you know how to do what you know how to do?** Likely, you copied your parent, learned from a teacher, picked it up from a friend, or watched a YouTube video about it. We watch the person that is the best at something, someone we aspire to be like, and we mimic their behavior until it becomes our own.

You may hear the expression, "She's her mother's daughter", or "He's his father's son". Canyon Barry is very much his father Rick's son. The granny shot is not a gimmick for them. Canyon Barry takes granny-style foul shots all the time, and the reason it's such a spectacle is that he's really, really good at it. Barry shot around 88 percent this year at the line, in his first year since transferring to the University of Florida. He's made his free throws an art form. The underhand foul shot is very much a family thing. Barry's father is Rick Barry, the former NBA player who became synonymous with that shooting form. But the underhand free throw has more or less died off in the major college and professional game. Canyon Barry is not the first player at a big-time school to use it recently, but he's the first one to do it well in a while.

This Like Jesus series will not solve the free throw problem. But we will see what the Bible says about what it looks like to LIVE LIKE JESUS. What were the foundations for his life that need to be the example for ours? **How will you learn to live the Christian life? Who will be your example and teacher?** As followers of Jesus, how do we know how to do what we know how to do? We could mimic the example of others as they follow Jesus, especially those who do it well. But, that's still a second hand example of being Like Jesus. Jesus is our example. He is the one we follow. There is no substitute for studying the life of Jesus in the Bible for yourself, no substitute for a personal relationship with Jesus, no substitute for the Holy Spirit in your life to show you how to LIVE LIKE JESUS. What does it look like to live as Jesus lived, to be like Jesus? Let's study the Bible

together and see. 1John 2:1-6 is a key passage for this series, LIKE JESUS. John says that if we abide in Him, we ought to walk as Jesus walked. **Read 1John 2:1-6.**

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. ³ And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵ but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

For Jesus to be our example, we need to **know Jesus**. What does it mean to know Jesus, and to know that we know? John says that we can come to know Jesus Christ because of two things, both the righteous life He lived and his propitiation for our sin. It is on these grounds—his sinless life and death in our place—that we know Jesus when we trust in Him. Next John says in verse 3 that we can know that we know Jesus if we keep his commands. John is not referring to faultless obedience, but to a new trajectory of life that springs from the radical transformation of having been born again. John is also not saying that our obedience merits or earns God's love (he has already established Christ's propitiating sacrifice as the basis of our salvation), but rather that those who have God's love show it. We can know Jesus when by faith we put our trust in His work for us. We can know that we know Jesus if we live like Jesus. John says in verse 5, "Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

Living like Jesus does not gain his love, but evidences it. We can actually walk as Jesus walked because the incarnate Jesus, fully God and fully man, in his full humanity set for us an example. He became man as God intended man to be. So, if we abide in Him, we ought to walk as Jesus walked.

Today, to kick off this LIKE JESUS series we are going to explore what it means to BEGIN LIKE JESUS.

We only have a few glimpses in Scripture of what Jesus life was like before the age of 30 when he began his public ministry. It would be fascinating to know more about what Jesus was like growing up wouldn't it? So many questions we don't know the answers to. What were his first words? Who was his closest friend? What did he like to eat? Who was his favorite relative? What was the first thing he built on his own? "What was Jesus like as a kid?" I'd love to know some of those answers, but I trust that God has told us all that we need to know in the Bible about what it means to BEGIN LIKE JESUS.

VIDEO – Jesus as a Young Man. We are going to watch a 5-minute video filmed from a precipice near Nazareth. This short video reminds us that Jesus grew up in a real place. Sometimes we wrongly see his life as only a story from long, long ago in a land far, far away. However, He was here on this earth and walked among us in a specific time and place. Take a look at the place where Jesus grew up as a boy. It sets the backdrop for our understanding of what it means to BEGIN LIKE JESUS.

How do we BEGIN like Jesus?

To begin like Jesus, I urge you to . . .

1. Consider God's CALLING on your life. *Matthew 2:1-18, Luke 2:1-40*)

Matthew and Luke tells us about the birth of Jesus, and about how as a CHILD, God the Father provided for and protected His Son. We know these stories, because Matthew the disciple and former tax collector, and Luke, the physician and travel companion of Paul, wrote them down as directed by the Holy Spirit as told to them by eyewitnesses. Likely Mary told these stories about his birth to Jesus as He grew up and to his disciples as she interacted with them. Jesus took on the humility, the weakness, and the vulnerability of a baby and experienced God's provision and protection. As Jesus began his life, He considered his CALLING as he reflected on some unique gifts that His Father blessed him with.

Have you ever thought about the gifts that God the Father gave His Son? Think about it. You have likely read about them, but possibly never recognized them for the good gifts they are. **How about the gift of a name?** (Matthew 1:21) God said to call Him Jesus and that it will be "the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow" (Phil. 2:9-10) **What about the gift of great parents and a family?** (Mark 6:3) Mary and Joseph were incredibly responsive to God's assignment for them to parent Jesus. God tells Mary she's going to have a baby (which must have come as a surprise) and she says, "May it be to me as you have said" (Luke 1:38). God says to name him Jesus and both Mary and Joseph agree. Of course, they will. God tells Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, so Joseph marries a pregnant woman who is carrying a child that is not his. **What about the gift of a place to be born?** (Luke 2:7) What an unusual story that must have been to grow up with. Jesus, close the door, were you born in a barn? Actually . . . I'll bet Jesus loved that joke. God gave Jesus **the gift of a birth announcement sung by angels** (Luke 2:9-14) and the **gift of a star** (Mt. 2:2), **the gift of shepherds** and **wise men** who confirmed that he was the Messiah. The **gift of a cousin** who would leap in the womb and prepare the way for Him. The **financial gift** from the wise men likely provided for their escape to Egypt. The **gift of protection from Herod.** (Mt. 2:13) God always provided for His Son. Growing up experiencing and hearing stories about this provision and protection from His Father had to convince Jesus that He was here on this earth for a purpose. As He considered the Father's CALLING on his life he must have come to realize that He was born to make a spiritual impact.

To BEGIN LIKE JESUS, consider Gods calling on your life. How have you come to understand that God put you on this earth for a reason? Do you see God's hand on your life, protecting and providing for you? God has a purpose for you and my guess is that today you either need to be encouraged to discover that calling or to be challenged to remember that calling. Here are some punny ways to remember this idea in honor of

Jonathan Anderson, the king of puns. What's the reason for a chair? The answer is sitting in front of you. What's the purpose of a watch? Don't get so wound up about it. What is your brain's function? I don't mind telling you. The design behind a dolphin? It was very much on porpoise. Why a pencil? It clearly has a point. But seriously, God created you on purpose, with a purpose, which can only be lived out in relationship with God. That's the story we heard multiple times last week as people were baptized, people discovering that their life's purpose came into clarity as they came to realize that God had put them on this earth for a reason.

We see the impact that recognizing this calling had on Jesus in the next glimpse we have into his life as a boy.

To begin like Jesus, I urge you to . . .

2. Follow the Father's COMPASS for direction. *Luke 2:39-52*

From his infancy to the age of 12, Luke 2:40 is what we know about Jesus childhood, "that Jesus grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him". We see in this passage from Luke 2 that by the time he was twelve Jesus had considered the CALLING of God the Father on his life through His provision and protection. Now, we see him using the Father's COMPASS to guide his direction for life.

Have you ever wondered what 12-year-old Jesus was like? What questions did he wrestle with as a young Jewish boy who was about to become a man? Jesus was likely educated in a local synagogue in Nazareth under the instruction and guidance of a religious leader. This yearly trip to Jerusalem, was like many others his family had taken together to celebrate the Feast of the Passover, but it was also unique for Jesus this time. Now that he was twelve, he would have been able to ask questions and interact with the religious leaders. What questions might he bring with him to Jerusalem? Like any 12 year old in his situation, Jesus likely wondered, "Why do people say I look more like my mother than my father?" "Why do I not have my father's name or at least my grandfather's name?" "Why do the Messiah and I have so much in common? Does everybody else see what I see in Scripture?"

Here we see just a glimpse of Jesus using His Father's COMPASS to give him direction in life in verse 46, "After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." Jesus appears to know, understand, and enjoy studying God's Word. So much so, that verse 47 says "everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers". Jesus was growing in his vertical relationship with God the Father and in his horizontal relationships with others. In the study of the life of Christ, Knowing Him, Mark Edwards wonders if a possible conversation between Jesus and the religious leaders might have gone something like this:

Jesus: Is it true that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem of Judah?

Teachers: Yes, of course, young lad all good Jews know that it is written in Micah 5:2, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel.”

Jesus: But isn't it also true that the Messiah will come forth out of Egypt?

Teachers: Silly boy, we just told you that He would come forth out of Bethlehem! How could He come out of two places?

Old priest from the back: Now, hold on a minute, I believe the boy has a legitimate question. Yes, I believe it is true. Look, right here – it is written in Hosea 11:1, “...and out of Egypt I called My son.” (all are astonished)

Jesus: So, what if the Messiah was born in Bethlehem and then, for some strange reason, His family had to move to Egypt for a time and then they returned. Could that be a possible explanation for the two scriptures? (all are amazed) You know, I was born in Bethlehem and then my family moved to Egypt for awhile.

When Jesus parents finally find him in the temple after three days, Jesus response gives us a glimpse into his thinking as a boy. His Father's Compass was what he would follow to give direction to His life. His simple answer to Mary in verse 49 is, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I MUST be in MY FATHER'S house?” He had considered God the Father's calling on his life. He knew that He was put on this earth for a purpose and now the Father's compass gave his life direction so that HE MUST be in His Father's house. As fully human, Jesus would follow that compass for the next 18 years, submissive to his parents and increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

To BEGIN LIKE JESUS, I urge you to follow the Father's Compass for direction. You are probably wondering what that looks like. I believe it is as simple as committing to this idea from Proverbs 3:6, “in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight”. Study and meditate on God's word, communicate with God through prayer and then allow that compass setting to direct your life. IF you don't, your life may begin to feel like my 16 year old experience of driving the family home to Iowa from Chicago. The rest of the family was distracted or sleeping, but I was confident in my ability to navigate our route home from memory and instinct. Instead of asking, checking the map, or even following a compass, I took a right instead of a left and figured out around Wisconsin that something wasn't right. To Begin Like Jesus, I urge you to follow the Father's compass.

To begin like Jesus, I urge you to . . .

3. Embrace the CHALLENGES that will arise. *Psalm 69:7-12*

We are going to wrap-up this teaching today by looking at an unexpected place to better understand Jesus as a young man. Let me connect the dots for you before we dive in. The Good News promise of a Messiah is a

theme that is woven through Scripture from beginning to end. Jesus is not just in the New Testament, but all of the Bible is ultimately about Him. We are going to look in the Old Testament at Psalm 69:7-12, to learn about Jesus as a young man because the New Testament applies this passage to Jesus in John 2. When Jesus overturns the tables of the money changers, the disciples remember that it is written in Psalm 69:9 about the Messiah, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

This passage teaches us about the challenges that Jesus, the Messiah, experienced as a young man as he embraced the challenges that arose because of his passion for His Father. When we begin like Jesus, to walk as Jesus walked, we live out the calling for God's purpose for our life, we follow His compass to direct our steps, and then we need to be prepared to embrace the CHALLENGES that will arise because of our passion for God. Here were some of the challenges that Jesus faced, challenges that we can perhaps relate to: **READ Ps.69:7-12.**

- Jesus was dishonored (69:7)
- Jesus was a stranger and alien to His brothers (69:8)
- Jesus was reproached (rebuked, reprimanded, blamed) (69:9-10)
- Jesus was a byword, a joke to the people in the community. (69:11)
- Jesus was the talk of the elders in the city gates. (69:12)
- Jesus was the song of the drunkards. (69:12)

Prior to John the Baptist – the Jewish people hadn't heard from God for 400 years. 400 years of silence. It was into this hard-hearted religious community steeped in tradition and formality that Jesus brought a zeal for the Father, which was misunderstood and ridiculed. Jesus was familiar with the pain and the challenges that followed him through his life because of his passion for God the Father. He can sympathize with us when we struggle to follow God and face our own challenges.

Hebrews 4:14-16, *"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and grace to help in time of need."*

Whether you have been following Jesus for 3 days or 30 years, beginning like Jesus means that your life is lived considering God's calling, following God's compass, and embracing the challenges. **How will you begin to walk as Jesus walked?** I was talking to Ella about this yesterday as we drove home from a soccer match in Des Moines. I was telling her about the challenges in Psalm 69 that Jesus faced growing up, often feeling isolated and alone. He put himself in a position to be vulnerable. I told her that I think almost all of us have moments growing up where we felt misunderstood, rejected to some degree and alone. I know I did. Jesus can relate to those moments. That's when she reminded me about something simply profound that I'll leave us with today. **When you're living the Christian life, it's always better to do it with some other people who are excited about following Jesus too.** Following Jesus is a team sport. Let's face the challenges together, side by side.