



What do we hope for?

Luke 2:41-52

## VIDEO

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

### WHITCHURCH HIGH SCHOOL

Important time in a child's life is when they go to "big" school. Most of us I'm sure can remember our first day at senior school. I can. My biggest memory is that I was expected to get in the top stream at school and I got very upset and agitated that all my friends got into the five top stream classes but my name wasn't called. Except that R is very low down the alphabet and I was one of the last to be allocated to the last top stream class.

Why the expectation of top stream? Because my parents wanted me to be there. The eleven plus had been abolished the year previously but there were assessments in class at school for the new comprehensive school and my mother made me do all sorts of extra work to make sure no mistakes were made!

I'm not sure what my parent's aspirations were actually for me when I was 12. I don't think they ever saw a Baptist Minister on the horizon. Like most parents, my Mum and Dad wanted me to have as many options as possible open to me to progress through life and reach the highest levels if I wanted to.

### GARETH BALE

One famous product of Whitchurch High school is Gareth Bale. I wonder if his parents ever thought their football mad kid would ever actually become a Premier League and international footballer?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

When I was 12 I wanted to become an astronomer. That was my hobby and I was very keen on it. Actually I was later put off it when I found at that I needed to be able to do advanced maths to become an astronomer and maths wasn't my forte.

What do 12 year old children want in life these days. Here's some quotes from children in Coventry. Quote sheet.

### PICTURE FROM VIDEO

Our story this morning concerned a visit Jesus made with his mother and father to Jerusalem when he was 12. This was and still is a significant age for Jews. It's at 12 that Jewish boys usually take their Bar Mitzvah: they come of age. They become men – and we say our children grow up quickly these days.

### ASTONISHED MARY

We of course know Jesus had a remarkable birth – so did Mary. It was to Mary that the angel brought the astonishing news that she was to have a son even though she was a virgin. Mary's reply was *"let it be to me according to your word."* But just what did it all mean? Did Mary really grasp just what it meant to bear someone who will be *"be great and will be called the Son of the Most High."*

#### SHEPHERDS

It must have been equally amazing for Mary to have had the visit from the shepherds that evening Jesus was born. The angel had said to them "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. Mary knew all about the Christ – the Messiah that would come and save the Jewish nation, but actually the angel said Jesus was going to be good news for everyone.

#### MARY KEPT THINKING ABOUT ALL THIS AND WONDERED WHAT IT ALL MEANT

It left her wondering. It wasn't long before she was wondering again.

#### SIMEON

Jesus was taken to the temple at Jerusalem for a ceremony called the purification. It was performed by mothers for their ritual purification after childbirth. But as they were there, Mary got a shocking prophecy from Simeon – a prophet whom the Spirit of God had moved to be at the temple that day. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: *"This child of yours will cause many people in Israel to fall and others to stand. The child will be like a warning sign. Many people will reject him, 35 and you, Mary, will suffer as though you had been stabbed by a dagger. But all this will show what people are really thinking."* (CEV)

She knew that for her, Jesus was going to be great, but a source of massive pain for her. And back they went to Nazareth and life was just normal as a family for them – Joseph as a carpenter, Mary as a mum to for more brothers and an unspecified number of sisters. A busy middle eastern household.

Then Jesus reached a landmark in his life. He turned 12. At 12 Jewish boys in those days became men. They had a ceremony which Jews still have today – a Bar Mitzvah.

#### JERUSALEM SLIDE

The family travelled down to Jerusalem as always, to perform all the necessities of Passover. Jesus, now as a Jewish man, expecting to take on responsibilities of adulthood.

I found that quite interesting as there was yet another news report this week that in our society our children are under pressure to grow up too fast. I find that fascinating because at 12, Jesus was now expected to take on manhood – learn his father's trade and start to take his role in the synagogue and seriously learn the Torah and live by it.

I talked earlier about expectations that children have of themselves and what we as parents expect of the. It was expected that Jesus would be a carpenter like Joseph, yet his parents already knew that God had said he was someone very special, which left

Mary pondering, concerned, wondering.

Now they were in for a shock, because what they thought and what Jesus thought were two different things! The family travelled down to Jerusalem and all went well until the trip home when they realised after a day that Jesus wasn't with the party! All of us parents have had the experience. We've lost our children – or maybe they've lost us. We worry. It doesn't change even into adulthood.

## TEMPLE

Back they go to Jerusalem and search for him, only to find him in the temple confounding the scholars there. Just a moment they didn't know Jesus was a theological prodigy! Besides which, how dare he run off back to the temple. Here was the exchange:

*When his parents found him, they were amazed. His mother said, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been very worried, and we have been searching for you!" 49 Jesus answered, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I would be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he meant. 51 Jesus went back to Nazareth with his parents and obeyed them. His mother kept on thinking about all that had happened. 52 Jesus became wise, and he grew strong. God was pleased with him and so were the people.*

Oh dear, he was not going to be the son they had expected, but they were still confused and didn't understand. Of course, with the wisdom of hindsight, we knew that all Jesus had done was to show that come of age with regard to his real Father. He understood that even though his parents had a plan for him – to be a carpenter – God had a different plan for him. It wasn't as if they hadn't been told. But somehow it hadn't registered. Mary just kept on mulling it all over. Jesus was going to be different from his parents' expectations.

## WHAT DO WE HOPE FOR?

Parents – what do we hope for our children? We've thought of how we often want the very best for our children. Well let me give you the very very best for your children – that they know Jesus Christ in a personal and real way from a young age. Pray for them, encourage them. Once they have become adults, continue to pray for them. If they haven't received Jesus yet then keep on praying. We live in a generation that are discovering that living without God is just a recipe for disaster and life can be pointless without Him.

Knowing Jesus is about life and purpose and hope. Perhaps you've never received Jesus for yourself – today's the day to do it. Ask God to give you the real understanding of purpose that accepting Jesus brings.