

## I. Introduction

- A. Welcome to Neighborhood and 2017.
- B. Today, you are in on the ground floor of a new series. It is called Christus Victor. We will review all the major events in the life of Christ.
- C. I picked this series for a few reasons.
  - 1. One is because we have so many men and women who are new Christians. You are just starting out your journey. Neighborhood, you realize that last month alone, we welcomed into God's family over 240 men, women, and children? That was just December!
    - a) So I picked this series because you need to grow in your knowledge of Christ and of the great powers you have now that he is in your life.
  - 2. I also picked this series because so many are going through tough times. I want you to know you have a Savior and King who is tougher, stronger, fiercer, and steadier than any foe you could ever face. Christus Victor, the Champion You Need in the Battle for your life. So, that's another reason.
  - 3. I also picked this series because we all need to go back to our roots and remember who we are and whose we are.
  - 4. So this 2017 is a season of laying a foundation. Who is Jesus? How is he God? How is he human? What was his life like? What does he mean to me?
- D. Welcome to Christus Victor.

## II. Christus Victor

- A. Christus Victor is a Latin phrase that means Christ the Victor, or Christ the Champion. Let me put on my professor hat, and get theological with you.
  - 1. The major category here is called *Christology* - the study of everything the Bible says about Jesus.
  - 2. The two main divisions of Christology are
    - a) 1. *His Person, who he is.*
    - b) 2. *His Work, what he did.*
    - (1) So, the Person and Work of Christ.
  - 3. One way to study Christ, and to learn Christology is to study the major events in his life.
  - 4. And that is my plan from now to Easter.
  - 5. If you Google Christus Victor, you will get 87,900 results. I didn't make up the term. It's pretty common in theology. I won't go into the history of the term today, but over time, we'll get there.
  - 6. Over the next weeks, we will see what the Bible says about Christ's childhood, baptism, temptation, calling the disciples, teaching, miracles, arrest and trials, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, session, and second coming. Get all that?
    - a) And we're going to look at all of events with an eye on Christ as the Champion you need in the Battle for your life.
  - 7. If I were teaching this series in seminary, I would start with the birth of Christ, Christmas, called the Incarnation of Christ. But, since I just preached three messages about that last month, let's roll the tape forward a bit.
  - 8. Let's start with Christ's Childhood. There's not a lot in the Bible about his childhood. So a verse and a story.

## III. Christ's Childhood

- A. *And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. (Luke 2:40, NKJV).*
  - 1. So, let's just pause and make our first observation:
    - a) 1. *Jesus Christ was fully human, just like us, except for sin.*
      - (1) (He was also fully divine/God, but we haven't gotten there yet.)
  - 2. He wasn't born with a fully formatted mental hard drive. He had to "grow" in wisdom. He had to grow to be strong in spirit. He had to learn to crawl, to walk, to eat, to talk.
  - 3. He wasn't a miniature adult laying in the manger.
  - 4. Jesus had two natures, in one person, human and divine. And the human nature had all the limitations our human nature has.
    - a) He could feel pain.
    - b) He could learn.
    - c) He could grow.
    - d) He could change, adapt, wonder, feel, think, imagine, question, and experience every human emotion.
      - (1) Jesus was a baby, a child, and a man. Fully human.
    - e) He could cry.
    - f) He could say there were certain things he didn't know (Mark 13:32).
    - g) He could be hungry. He could be thirsty.
    - h) He could be tempted (Hebrews 4:15).
    - i) He could suffer.
    - j) He could die.
  - 5. The limitations you feel, he felt. The temptations you feel, he felt. The body you live in, he lived in one too.
  - 6. Jesus never cheated by using his own God powers to make his life easier. Not one little bit. He entered this world as a human, lived as a human with all the pains, and problems, and heartbreaks, and relationships, and confusions that we have.
  - 7. The next time you're tempted to make Jesus into a Superman or Hercules or IronMan or some kind of super-hero, stop. He wasn't. He was frail flesh and blood, and though he had God powers, he didn't use them. He willingly limited himself. He voluntarily boxed his God powers in, so that that he could plunge himself into the icy waters of earth — also known as the Giant Pain Machine — and walk the exact same path we all have to walk.
  - 8. All of which sets up the only real story the Bible tells us from his childhood. Let's read it, and make some comments along the way.

- B. *His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. (Luke 2:41-45, NKJV).*
1. Did you ever lose your kid in the store? That's how his mother, Mary, and his earthly father, Joseph, felt.
  2. This Feast, the Passover, would have brought thousands of Jews to Jerusalem. The roads would be full of families. Kids running around. Old friends. A party atmosphere. Families mixing and melding along the way. Kids would eat with their friends. They would vanish for hours on end during the long walk there and back. It was nothing for young Jesus to be out with his friends, and his mom and dad not see him for long stretches at a time.
  3. But this one stretched out too long. After traveling for a whole day, they made the terrible realization they lost their son. Day One. They turn around and head back to Jerusalem. And even though they hurried, that's Day Two.
  4. They get back to Jerusalem. It's a big town full from visitors who haven't left. They get back, probably at night.
  5. Have you seen Jesus? Where's Jesus? Have you seen our son?
  6. They hunt, they look, they question. You can feel the knot in their stomachs and the pounding of the heart. You can hear the panic in their voices.
  7. Where's our son?
- C. *Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. (Luke 2:46, 47, NKJV).*
1. He is in the Temple. This is a giant building inside a very big complex of buildings. This would be a crowded, busy, bustling place.
  2. He is sitting in the midst of the teachers. These would be Rabbis and teachers of God's law.
  3. Other books, beside the Bible, describe this setting. The Jewish leaders, called Rabbis, were highly regarded professors of Scripture. The highest ranking leaders were called the Sanhedrin. When there were these festivals, like Passover, they would go to a kind of an amphitheater in the Temple complex.
  4. The people would sit on the ground.
  5. But the Rabbis sat in several tiers of seats. These were arranged in a semi-circle, half round. All the Rabbis could see each other. The top Rabbis sat in the highest seats. Then it stepped down to another semi-circle of the next tier down, and another, and another after that.
  6. The Rabbis in training sat below them, in three more rows, each one 23 wide, in another semi-circle.
  7. So this is a really intimidating set up.
  8. Basically, if you took the whole upper deck in our auditorium, and bent it into a semi-circle... and then filled it with rabbis, with their giant beards, and imposing robes, and shawls and hair curls... all rising up in tiered seating.
  9. And then you put hundreds of people sitting on the floor stretching way behind me, you have the picture.
  10. And now, put a twelve year old boy, sitting in the front row, on the floor, in the hot seat, asking the questions, and discussing the answers.
  11. That is the picture.
  12. They are discussing the Bible, the Scriptures.
  13. They are discussing Theology.
  14. Which is to say, that the first conscious choice the Bible records above Jesus is this: the child Jesus chose to wrap his mind around God's Operating System for the Cosmos and everything in it.
  15. What is truth?
    - a) Truth is reality.
  16. What is truth?
    - a) Truth is reality as God experiences it, God sees it, and God reveals it in the Bible.
    - b) Truth is a description of the world that matches the world as it really is.
  17. And here is the boy, Jesus, wrapping his mind around truth.
  18. And at age twelve, this giant group of professors is astonished at his understanding and answers.
  19. He blew their minds.
  20. And right away, you are tempted to say, well, he was Jesus, of course he blew their minds. He's God, and he knew all this stuff. Heck, he created all this stuff.
  21. Yes to the fact base, but no to the conclusion.
    - a) Because you just described him as a cheater, and that is not how Scripture presents him.
  22. He was a kid, and he had to learn this stuff just like you do. He was a blank slate, and truth had to be written across his soul, just like it has to be written across yours.
  23. Through exposure to the Bible, over and over and over again.
  24. He was not astonishing by virtue of his God-power.
  25. He was astonishing by virtue of his human passion, and hunger, and grasp of Scripture—by the ability to see its deep truths, and to piece truth with truth to create a coherent masterpiece.
  26. That's what the boy has been doing for the last three days, and into the scene bursts his Mom with "the look."
  27. You know what look I mean?
    - a) Bulging eyes.
    - b) Crazy hair.
    - c) Sweater is buttoned crooked.
    - d) Madwoman written across her face.
    - e) Crooked glasses.

- f) Hasn't washed in two days.
  - g) She is at DefCon One.
  - h) And this is in front of all the Rabbis, and Sanhedrin, and interns, and pilgrims from all over the world.
    - (1) But, it's mama bear, and she doesn't care.
28. Let's just say, A scene was made.
- D. *So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." (Luke 2:48, NKJV).*
- 1. Starting with the end.
  - 2. Your father and I have sought you—that's language for a search party.
  - 3. Anxiously—that word means agony.
  - 4. "Why have you done this to us."
    - a) What is that?
      - (1) It's an accusation.
      - (2) From Mom.
  - 5. And the funny thing is she was right. He freaked her out.
    - a) *Why have you done this to us?*
  - 6. Hold onto that question, and let's see the twelve year old's answer.
- E. *And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. (Luke 2:49-51, NKJV).*
- 1. Mom bursts in, all freaked out.
  - 2. Jesus, the boy, the twelve year old, looks at her with this massive serenity written across his face. How would you like to be mom to that?
    - a) She asked why.
    - b) He asks why.
    - c) She asked, Why did you do this to me?
    - d) He asked, Why did you [launch a search party] for me?
    - e) She's saying, You should have known better.
    - f) He's saying, No, Mom, YOU should have known better.
    - g) Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?
    - h) Or, to be really literal with the original Greek language, Did you not know that I must be about the things of My Father?
  - 3. Do you realize that these are the ONLY recorded words of Jesus until he turns 30 years old?
  - 4. What's he saying, what should she have known?
    - a) Where to find him?
      - (1) Maybe, but that's secondary.
    - b) Not to worry?
      - (1) Yes, but that's still secondary.
    - c) That he's spiritual, and would be doing spiritual things? That we should make God's will first, and follow his example?
      - (1) Quit being so stinking religious. That's not his main point either.
  - 5. What's he saying?
- F. The Story
- 1. I'm going to tell you a story. It's an analogy, but not what you think it is. I'll explain in a bit.
    - a) Once upon a time, there was mighty lion with a deafening roar. Fearless. Majestic. Glorious.
    - b) One day, the lion came to live among sheep. He made himself small, so he wouldn't frighten them. He made himself weak, so he wouldn't intimidate them. He made himself quiet, so he wouldn't drive them away.
    - c) All the sheep enjoyed him. They thought he was just like them. And he was, in some ways. But he wasn't in others.
    - d) One day, a pack of wolves came to eat the sheep.
    - e) They bleated, and trembled, and huddled together. "This is how we will save ourselves," the said. "We will create a quivering mass and hope the wolves get scared by our size."
    - f) The lion stepped forward.
    - g) The other sheep dragged him back. "No, come back. Be with us. You're one of us. Stay with us."
    - h) No, said the lion. I am stronger than the wolves.
    - i) "No," said the sheep. "You are weak, like us. Stay with us."
    - j) No, said the lion, I am not one of you.
    - k) "You are just like us," the frightened sheep said.
    - l) No, said the lion, I am not like you.
    - m) "Stay with us. You are safe here." the sheep said.
    - n) No, said the lion. To stay with you is to die.
    - o) And the lion stepped forth.
    - p) And breathed in his deepest breath.
    - q) And let out a thunderous roar.
    - r) And the wolves turned tail and ran.
    - s) And the sheep gasped and they all fainted.
    - t) The end.
  - 2. You think you know what I mean, but you don't. Please hold off your conclusions.

3. *2. Jesus was, is, and always will be, fully God.*
  - a) He is undiminished deity, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He is God.
4. BUT THAT IS NOT IN VIEW HERE. Please set his God-nature aside for a while.
5. When my little story makes him a lion who joined the sheep, I am NOT saying he was God who joined humanity.
6. That is true, but it's not my point, and it is not Scripture's point here at all either.
7. When I say Jesus was a LION, I mean it AS A MAN. He was a lion-hearted human.
  - a) *3. Jesus was fearless, brave, and strong, IN HIS HUMAN NATURE.*
8. Since the days of Adam and Eve, Jesus Christ was the first human born without a fallen nature. He was without the kryptonite of sin. He was fully human, and therefore ideally human.
9. *4. Jesus was the kind of person God meant us all to be.*
10. People are sheep. Sin made us that way. Culture made us that way. Peer pressure made us that way. The fall, and the curse, and the Pain Machine made us that way. Sheep. And sheep try to make everybody else sheep. Sheep pressure everybody to stay in the fold. Hey you, huddle in the quivering mass.
11. That's what Mary was trying to do to Jesus.
12. She wanted to put her hooks into him to make him a quivering sheep.
13. She was trying to tell him who he was, but she was mistaken. "Honey, little Lambkin, come back to mama where it's safe."
  - a) I just threw up a little in my mouth.
    - (1) What did your parents tell you about yourself?
      - (a) That you should have been a woman but you were born a man.
      - (b) That you shouldn't think for yourself?
      - (c) That the world is a scary place, so play it safe?
      - (d) That achievement equals fulfillment? (Ask all the miserable rich people how that worked for them.)
      - (e) Don't take risk. Don't be weird. Don't embrace your God-given sexuality, or passion, or personality, or uniqueness.
    - (2) Sweet little baby Jesus, mommy and daddy are here for you.
14. And with all due respect, he pointed to his heart, the human nature beating inside his twelve year old body... he pointed to his heart and said, "Mom, I'm not a sheep in here. I'm a lion."
  - a) Because that's how I was made.
15. And that's how every human was made until sin entered the picture.
16. *5. Your Father created you with the free-born heart of royalty.*
17. *6. But sin, and the fall, and the pain machine, and other people's craziness keeps pulling you down to their sheep-like level.*
  - a) I'm like you, because I'm human, Jesus said.
  - b) But unlike you, I am human unshackled from the drive to be accepted, the need to be needed, the dysfunction to fit in. None of that matters to me.
    - (1) Quit trying to make me a sheep, when I'm a lion... and you can be too, because it's how you were designed.
    - (2) Like I said, the only recorded words of Jesus before he was 30, and it's all about knowing something that most people don't discover till they're about 50.
  - c) *7. To be about my Father's business means to reflect the majesty of my spiritual DNA, the courage of my emotional DNA, and the respectful boundaries of my relational DNA.*
18. What is Jesus telling you?
19. He's telling you to roar. Not to be violent or crazy or mean or weird. But to be you.
20. He's saying that human nature has been so shrouded over with expectations and conformity and social norms, that it's sick. He's telling you that every single day the world around you is telling you who you are, and they're wrong.
  - a) With one tongue they tell you to be all you can be.
  - b) With the other tongue they tell you to fit in, and sit still, and quiet down, and fit the norm, and behave, and acquiesce to a world gone mad.
21. The man, Christ Jesus, is a lion. Ever since the Garden of Eden, he has been drawing in one gigantic breath, because, as a human, as a man, one day, at the end of time, he will unleash a roar so cataclysmic it will blow the devil head over heels into a far away place for all of eternity. CHRISTUS VICTOR.
  - a) He will do that as a man.
  - b) It is a human that sits on heaven's throne.
  - c) It is a human that crushes the devil's head.
  - d) It is a human that sat before those Rabbis, at age twelve...
    - (1) And what he discussed is the one thing that controls your life more than anything else:
  - e) He discussed the Bible's model of the world. What is this world? Who made it? Why is it here? Why are we here? How does it operate? What are the rules, the values, and the beliefs that will make a lifelong sheep shed the wooly fur, and reveal the glorious lion within?
  - f) Because that's how your father made you.
  - g) And that's the day your Father's joy is made full.
  - h) Now, Jesus does go with them. And he does submit to them, because that's part of the Scripture.
  - i) But Mary and Joseph come to see they have a tiger by the tail.
    - (1) *8. All of heaven cheers the roar of a man or woman fully themselves, and fully alive to God.*
  - j) And Jesus Christ, your Champion, has come to make you roar.