

Scripture: Luke 2:41-52

Text: Luke 2:52

Message: Where Are You Growing?

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We don't know much about the first 30 years of Jesus' life. There's a lot of emphasis on his birth and infancy. Then we have this one single incident of Jesus' boyhood days. It is recorded for us only by Luke. This incident is a visit to Jerusalem which Jesus made with his parents when he was twelve years old. At about this age, a young Jew became a "bar mitzvah" or a "son of the law." This meant that he had reached an age of maturity and responsibility with respect to keeping the requirements of the law. One of these requirements was to attend the special feasts in Jerusalem. Luke records for us Jesus' trip with his parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

It is good to read this story in the divinely inspired Scriptures. It reminds us that Jesus grew up like a normal boy. Yes, he was the Son of God. Yes, he was without sin. But he was also human. We may not deny his humanity and emphasize only his divinity.

Jesus grew and became strong. As with any child, there was physical growth and a corresponding increase in physical strength. He was filled with wisdom. This includes intellectual knowledge. Jesus had to learn, just as all children must learn. This also includes the ability to use this knowledge effectively and properly. Jesus was not only smart, he was also wise. And we read that the grace of God was upon him. In a noticeable way, God showed his favour and love to Jesus.

We have this story in Luke 2 where Jesus goes to the Passover feast with his parents, but doesn't leave with them. They return and search and by the third day they finally found him, sitting in the front court of the temple among the teachers.

The favourite method of teaching among the Jews was to use questions and answers, with both teachers and students asking and answering. With the Passover feast, there were probably a greater number of very learned and famous teachers at the temple. It was an opportunity which Jesus probably did not have in Nazareth.

What is highlighted in this story was the kind of questions asked and the answers given by this boy, Jesus. Both questions and answers revealed such insight. All who were listening were amazed. Jesus, having God's grace on him, already as a boy must have heard and understood Scripture differently than anyone else. We must also believe that Jesus was

learning here. He was human and did not know everything at once. But as he learned, he was strengthened in the awareness of his special calling from God.

When Mary and Joseph find Jesus, they were astonished and shocked. Mary's exclamation reveals a medley of surprise, reproach, and anguish. It was not normal for their son to worry them like that. Mary wanted Jesus to know clearly the pain that he had caused his parents.

In Jesus' reply there is also a hint of surprise as well as rebuke. Yet there were also deep undertones of love, of spiritual vision and sincere determination. "Why were you *searching* for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

Jesus seems to mildly rebuke his parents for anxiously searching for him. They should have *known* where to find him. It is understandable that they returned from their journey to find Jesus when he was not with them. But they should not have had to worry or search all over. Of course he had to be in his Father's house.

Jesus is saying two things here. One is a compliment to his parents. Had they not taught him to love the house of God and to delight in the law of God? We are given here a glimpse of Jesus' home life in Nazareth. It was not by a miracle or due to some divine attribute that Jesus knew his Scriptures so well and that he had such respect for God. The training he had received from God-fearing parents give him his knowledge and respect for God.

Jesus, at age 12, is also speaking here of his own awareness of his unique, intimate relationship with God as his Father. He corrects Mary who said "your father," referring to Joseph, with his own words "my Father's house," referring to God.

We see Jesus, as a child, already preparing for his future ministry. He had a close relationship with God. He *had to be* in his Father's house. Obedience to God was most important. He was learning and understanding the special calling he had from his Father and he always had to be busy doing his Father's work.

But even as we say this, we must never forget that Jesus was 12 years old when this event happened. He was a growing boy, like any twelve year old today. Yes, he was God's Son and without sin, but he still grew into this knowledge about himself. He grew in wisdom and understanding of his place in the plan of his Father in heaven.

How do our children and youth grow in wisdom? How do adults grow in wisdom? Do we ever reach an age when we stop growing in wisdom?

This morning Sheila Dykstra is with us. She has a role in Nigeria and West Africa of teaching teachers, to help children and adults grow in knowledge and wisdom. She is going to help continue and apply this method with a “teaching session.”

TEACHING ON LUKE 2.52

1. Share a proverb/verse you know about wisdom:

2. What IS wisdom?

3. In what ways do we need to grow?

Luke 2.52

Wisdom: _____

Stature: _____

Favour with God: _____

Favour with man: _____

4. Exploring Scripture Activity.

What does this passage tell us about growing in wisdom? How can we apply this in our classrooms/schools?

James 1:5

Proverbs 9:10

Proverbs 4:5-9

Colossians 3:16

5. Action Planning - Complete the following sentences:

I can help my students (children, grandchildren)

grow like Christ mentally/intellectually by:

grow like Christ physically by:

grow like Christ spiritually by:

grow like Christ socially by: