

“Jesus’ Childhood”  
(Luke 2:41-52)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

We’ve seen so far:

The Lord send Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem –

“The house of bread,” –

So that He might send

The bread that gives life –

Jesus –

Into the world

The angel announcing the good news

Of His birth to the shepherds,

That they might be witnesses

To the fulfillment of His promise.

The angels glorifying and praising God

For the mercy He was showing man,

As well as to give the shepherds

Something more to tell

Those who were waiting

For God’s salvation.

The shepherds go,

Find the child,

And begin telling everyone

What they had seen

And what had been told about Him.

We saw Jesus receive

The mark of God's covenant with Abraham –

Circumcision –

Showing that He is the seed

God promised to Abraham –

We saw Him given the name

By which the angel said He would be called –

Jesus: “the Lord is salvation” –

Which shows us why He came –

His presentation

To the Lord at Jerusalem –

And His redemption –

Since He was first-born –

Which was another picture

Of His mission to redeem us from our sins.

Rabban Simeon's prophecy –

The son of the famous Rabbi Hillel,

And the father of Gamaliel –

Paul's teacher –

As he confirmed by the Spirit

Not only that Jesus was the Lord's Messiah,

But that He must suffer and die

To bring the light of God's salvation

Both to Jew and Gentile.

We saw Anna's prophetic confirmation –  
The one who had served the Lord  
Through fasting and prayer  
In the Temple for so many years.

Finally, we saw Joseph and Mary return to Nazareth –  
Where Jesus continued to grow –  
Both physically and intellectually –  
Reminding us that He is fully man,  
As well as fully God.

#### B. Preview.

This morning, Luke goes on to give us  
The only direct glimpse we have of Jesus' childhood.

We know something of what happened *to Him* as a child –  
That He was born in Bethlehem;  
That He lived there for about two years;  
That His parents took Him into Egypt  
When Herod attempted to kill Him;  
And that He grew up in Nazareth;

We know a little about what He did there –  
That He followed his father's trade  
And was a carpenter (Mark 6:3).

But this is the only record  
Of what *He did* during His childhood –

What He did

Was what the Father wants all His children to do,

What He wants us to train our children to do –

He *worshipped* His Father (vv. 41-43);

He made a concerted effort to *learn* His Father's will (vv. 43-50);

And He *did* what He learned (vv. 51-52).

## II. Sermon.

### A. First, He worshiped His Father (vv. 41-43) –

He wasn't the only One –

His parents did as well.

Luke tells us in verse 41,

That every year Joseph and Mary

Went up to Jerusalem

For the feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread.

There were three feasts all the Jewish men

Were required to attend each year:

Moses, "Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed" (Deu. 16:16).

Women could attend –

If their hearts moved them –

But they weren't required.

Luke tells us both Joseph and Mary went,

Taking Jesus with them:

Children also weren't required to attend –  
At least the boys weren't until they reached age 13,  
When they had their Bar-Mitzvah,  
And became subject to the Law as the adults –  
The Bar-Mitzvah is the Jewish rite of passage  
That marks moving from childhood to adulthood –  
Girls went through a Bat-Mitzvah  
Which served the same purpose.

Jesus was 12 (v. 42),  
Which means He wasn't there  
Because the Law required it,  
But because His parents were training Him,  
And because He wanted to participate  
In the feast that was a memorial  
Of God's redemption of His people from Egypt,  
As well as a picture of the redemption  
He came into the world to accomplish.

Luke tells us not only that they came,  
But that they stayed there *the full number of days*.

Jewish men were only required  
To be at the feast for the first two days,  
After which they could leave:  
Joseph and Mary stayed  
For the full seven days of the feast –

We'll notice in a minute,  
That Jesus stayed even longer –  
  
They stayed because they wanted to worship.  
  
Of course, this wasn't their only worship –  
Being faithful Jews,  
They did so daily in their homes,  
In the synagogue on the Sabbath,  
And in their lives as they walked in God's ways.

We know Jesus did this  
To provide us with a perfect righteousness –  
  
He did it because this is what He wanted to do.  
  
But He also did it to give us an example to follow.

So what should we do?

First, we need to be *faithful* in worshipping God:

Daily in our homes –  
In our family and personal worship –  
  
Weekly on His holy day –  
In His morning and evening services,  
And throughout the day –

Each day –

As we live to please Him.

And as Joseph and Mary,

We need to teach/encourage our children to do the same.

We should also try to make the most

Of our time together –

Joseph and Mary stayed

The full number of days –

Jesus even longer –

We should try to be here

At the beginning of worship

And stay to the end;

We shouldn't be so quick to leave

When the service is over –

We should do this

Even if it creates financial difficulty:

Joseph and Mary were relatively poor –

The fact they offered a pair of birds

At Jesus' dedication shows us this –

And yet they took their whole family to this feast,

And stayed the whole time.

We first need to look at our priorities

When it comes to worship.

B. Second, Jesus made a concerted effort

To learn more of His Father's will (vv. 43-50).

After the Feast was over,

Jesus' parents returned to Nazareth,

Not knowing Jesus had stayed behind (v. 43).

Luke tells us

They were traveling in a caravan

With many relatives and acquaintances,

And so logically assumed Jesus was with one of them –

Knowing what kind of child Jesus was,

Any of them would have enjoyed His company.

After they had gone a day's journey,

They began looking for Him;

And when they didn't find Him,

They headed back to Jerusalem (vv. 44-45).

After searching for three days,

They found Him in the Temple –

Surrounded by the Jewish teachers,

Both listening to them,

And asking them questions (v. 46);

But unlike others they were used to teaching,

He was amazing them

With His understanding and answers (v. 47).

But we need to remember:

That though Jesus is fully God,

He's also fully man;

As God, He has unlimited knowledge,

But not as man –

As man, He had to be taught;

He had to learn.

We read in verses 40 and 52,

That He not only grew physically,

But intellectually.

The thing to notice here

Is that He wanted to learn –

Which is why,

When His parents made their last stop

At the Temple, before returning home –

Which was the custom –

Jesus stayed to do more study.

It's true the Spirit taught Him

And showed Him things

He couldn't have learned from man –

Which is one of the reasons

These teachers were amazed at His answers –

But it's also true that He needed *to learn*;

He loved His Father so much,  
That He *wanted to learn*  
As much as He could.

If we love Him –  
Which we do if we have His Spirit –  
We'll want to learn as well;  
But we will only to the degree  
That we love –  
Let's pray the Lord would strengthen our love.

What about Jesus' staying behind (v. 48)?  
Should we follow this example?

Yes. If we understand what He was doing.

He didn't sin –  
He didn't disobey His earthly parents;  
He didn't purposely try to hide from them;  
He didn't dishonor His heavenly Father;  
He was seeking to honor Him;  
And His parents should have known  
That this was what He would do (v. 49).

If we take our children to church  
And one day discover  
They didn't make the return trip home with us,  
But stayed behind that they might better learn  
How to worship and honor the Lord –

Would we be angry with them?

Joseph and Mary

Didn't fully understand

What Jesus did and what He said;

But they had learned to trust Him,

Because He never disobeyed them.

C. Finally, we see Jesus' obedience to His Father's will (vv. 51-52).

He returned with them to Nazareth

Where He continued in subjection to them

As He matured from childhood to adulthood –

Even after He was grown,

And had begun His ministry,

He continued to honor them –

Fulfilling the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12) -

As He grew, Luke tells us,

Those who knew Him

Grew in their admiration of Him;

So did His Father:

The Father always loved His Eternal Son

With a limitless love;

But as the Father watched Him grow,

And saw Jesus' obey Him in love,

His admiration for Him as a man also grew,  
To the point,  
That when Jesus presented Himself for baptism,  
The Father could say to Him  
In the hearing of all who were present,  
“You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased” (Luke 3:22).

Again, Jesus did this to save us;  
But He did it mainly  
Because He loved His Father:

If we want to be saved,  
We need to look to Jesus  
And His obedience alone;

If we want to please the Father,  
We need to obey Him from the heart,  
As Jesus did.

May the Lord help us to do so. Amen.

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