

**“Sassy Jesus”**  
**A sermon by**  
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**Appleton, WI**  
**January 13/14, 2018**

**Luke 2:41-52**

*<sup>41</sup> Now every year [Jesus’s] parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. <sup>43</sup> When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. <sup>44</sup> Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup> When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup> When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.” <sup>49</sup> He said to them, **“Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”** <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he said to them. <sup>51</sup> Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, **and was obedient to them.** His mother treasured all these things in her heart.*

*<sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.*

We've learned what it means to be chosen by God to be Jesus's father.  
We've learned what it means to be named by God Jesus – the person who will save us from our sins. Emmanuel – God with us.  
We've learned what it meant to need a Savior.  
We've learned how Jesus is the light for us and our hope.

We move now, not to Jesus in adulthood, which we tend to jump to after the birth, but we move to Jesus's childhood. This is the only place where we find a story about Jesus's childhood. We don't see something that we deem too significant like a miracle or a clue into God's kingdom. Instead, what we see is a little child giving attitude.

Well, ok, it's possible that Jesus asked his question like a well-behaved boy, but when you see the words of verse 49, can't you just hear the sass. "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

This passage shows us that Jesus had awareness of God's calling on his life, it gives us a sneak peak of Jesus's relationship with his divine father, the Pharisees and Sadducees, and even the temple. So, let's get into this scripture.

It was custom for families to journey to celebrate the Festival of Passover. This is the same holiday that would surround Jesus's death, and in both stories we don't hear much about the festival itself. Instead, we hear that when Jesus was 12, one year before being considered a man in Jewish tradition, he and his family and family-friends arrived to celebrate Passover, celebrated, and were traveling home.

Imagine to the surprise of Jesus's parents, when they realized that he was not with them. I mean, Come on, parents! Have you ever lost your child? Or had a dream about losing your child? It seems interesting that after Mary and Joseph had taken such care for the birth and safety of Jesus's infancy, that they would leave him behind in Jerusalem.

We do have to give Mary and Joseph some credit though. In that time period, it would not have been just the three of them traveling. We even are presented with a small description of the people who would have been

traveling with them. We see there were relatives and friends. This means there could have been up to a few hundred of people. So, after taking a few days journey back from Jerusalem, they realized that Jesus was not with them. Can you imagine how Mary and Joseph would have reacted when they found out that Jesus was not with them?

(In our own context, we would think...)

“Uh, honey.” – Joseph says.

“Yes, dear.” – Mary says.

“I don’t see Jesus.” – Joseph.

“What?! We have to find him!” – Mary

(Time passes.)

“Where is he?! How could we lose him!

Why did you let him out of your sight?!” – Mary

“I’m sorry, dear. I thought he was with his cousins.” – Joseph

“Well, why didn’t you check?” – Mary

“I’m sorry!” – Joseph

After searching in their group of family and friends, for 3 days, they finally found Jesus in the temple. We are told in verse 46 and following, “<sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.”

And then, the full reaction comes from Jesus’s parents. What is Jesus’s response? Sass.

Or sass in my book. Even if the demeanor is innocent, don’t the words themselves seem sassy.

“Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”

When we look deeper at the Greek, we see that the “father’s house” can also be “father’s business”. Either way we look at this, Jesus was aware of

God's purposes including Jesus beginning to fulfill what that purpose was. It calls us to reflect on the human and divine aspects of Jesus. It calls us to look at what younger ones have to offer.

Children are important. They are our future. We emphasize that, but yet we find ourselves criticizing that next generation as well.

What we have to realize is that we have things that we can learn from those who are much younger than us.

In the innocence of children, don't we see a sense of immense freedom, don't we see an untainted place of imagination, of wisdom, of love.

We learn about identity. Specifically we learn about our identity in God. While we may not have the same identity as Jesus where you spend 3 days in the temple learning, asking questions, and teaching as well. We are called to our identity in God.

Our identity is to be like children. We are told by Jesus, "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.'"

We need to find again our innocence, our immense freedom, our untainted place of imagination, of wisdom, of love.

It is when we find these things, that we can grow even deeper within our relationship with God. So often we complicate this relationship, and lose out. Instead let us channel our inner sass. Not too much though. We need to notice that our scripture tells us after Jesus's sass, he was obedient to his parents. So, you can bring your sass, but keep it in check.

Seriously though, we need to find again our innocence, our immense freedom, our untainted place of imagination, of wisdom, of love. It is then that we find our true identity in God.