

Sermon Outline

THE YEAR IN OUR LORD, 2012-2013

CHRIST JESUS, THE FILIAL SON: AN EPIPHANY MESSAGE (LUKE 2:41-51)

I. When God Was a Boy

II. Luke 2: When Messiah Was Young

- A. We first consider how our passage fits into the Gospel of Luke.
- B. The second chapter of Luke's Gospel focuses on the childhood of our Lord.
 - 1. 2:1-7: The birth of our Lord Jesus and the historic situations surrounding his birth
 - 2. 2:8-21: The angels announce to the shepherds that the Savior, Christ the Lord, has been born.
 - 3. 2:22-38: Mary and Joseph present Jesus their firstborn to God, as required by Old Testament law.
 - 4. 2:39: The holy family returns to Galilee, and to their hometown in Nazareth.
- C. Following 2:39, there is no more information about the infant years of Jesus except the fact that he "grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him" (2:40).

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What are some events recorded in Luke 2? (2) What are we told in 2:40?

III. An Annual Pilgrimage (Luke 2:41, 42)

- A. The next time we see Jesus is in verse 41—he is now twelve years old.
- B. Our account begins this way: "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover."
- C. The Feast of the Passover was one of the major festivals in the Old Testament calendar (Ex 12:27; Lev 23:5-6).
- D. The fact that Mary and Joseph go up to Jerusalem every year for Passover indicates that they were people who took their Jewish faith seriously.
- E. It was within this environment of Jewish piety that the young Jesus grew up.
 - 1. Under the instruction of his parents and the local synagogue, the young Jesus was taught the Scriptures and the history of Israel, God's covenant people.
 - 2. Because he had no sin, the young Jesus would have...
 - a. received the Scriptures faithfully

- b. seen himself as living in covenant with YHWH, the Lord God of heaven and earth,
 - c. sensed from very young a deep kinship to God himself.
- F. Verse 42 says that “when he was twelve years old,” Jesus and his family went up to Jerusalem on the Feast of Pentecost “according to custom.”
1. What was life like for you at twelve?
 2. In the Jewish culture of Jesus’ day, twelve was when a child begins to assume adult responsibility (John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, 129).
 3. As strange as it may sound, *God himself was once a twelve year old boy! The Lord YHWH was once a teenager!*

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How does the account begin in verse 41? How old is Jesus when this account unfolds? (2) Why was Jesus going to Jerusalem in verse 42? (3) The holy family “went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.” What does this tell us about the piety of Jesus’ household? (4) “God himself was once a twelve year old boy!” Reflect on this and discuss.

IV. The Boy Jesus Stayed Behind (Luke 2:43, 44)

- A. After the feast was over, the family returned to Nazareth.
- B. But Jesus was left behind in Jerusalem without his parents’ knowledge.
- C. How could Joseph and Mary have missed Jesus and left him behind?
 1. Verse 44 offers a clue: His parents supposed that he was “in the group.”
 2. When Joseph and Mary traveled to Jerusalem, they probably journeyed with all their relatives and friends from their hometown.
 3. Upon leaving Jerusalem, they simply assumed that Jesus was part of the caravan.
 4. The fact that Jesus was not in their immediate presence at the time they departed Jerusalem did not arouse alarm.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What happened after the feast was over? (2) How was it possible that Joseph and Mary could have lost track of Jesus?

V. Joseph and Mary Search for Jesus (Luke 2:44-45)

- A. After a day of travel, it occurred to Joseph and Mary that they had not seen Jesus for some time.
- B. So “they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances,”
- C. Eventually, they decide to return to Jerusalem to search for Jesus.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) When did it occur to Mary and Joseph that Jesus was not with their group? (2) What did Mary and Joseph do after they realized Jesus was not with them?

VI. Finding Jesus at the Temple (Luke 2:46-48)

- A. After three days of searching, Mary and Joseph take their search to the temple.
- B. At the temple, they see Jesus “sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.”
- C. “And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers” (v 47).
- D. Mary and Joseph “were astonished” (v 48).

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Where do Joseph and Mary find Jesus? (2) What was Jesus doing when they found him?

VII. Mary Scolds Jesus (Luke 2:48)

- A. After the initial wave of astonishment and relief, Mary starts to scold her son: “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.”
 - 1. The words “why have you treated us so?” carries a tone of accusation. —John Nolland: “Jesus is accused of having betrayed his parents, that is, of having betrayed the calling that was his as son of Joseph” (*Luke 1-9:20*, 131)
 - 2. The phrase “great distress” (*odunōmenoi*) literally means to “cause pain.”
- B. Mary was accusing Jesus of betraying and dishonoring his parents!

***Questions for reflection:** What did Mary say to Jesus? What was she accusing Jesus of doing?

VIII. “I Must Be in My Father’s House” (Luke 2:49)

- A. Jesus responds: “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”
- B. The first thing that comes through is the young Jesus’ own confusion.
 - 1. Jesus really was quite clueless as to what the fuss was all about.
 - 2. When he says, “Why were you looking for me?” Jesus meant it as a genuine question.
- C. More to the point: Why did Jesus think that his parents need not have gone looking all over for him?
 - 1. Perhaps it’s because they, of all people, ought to have known where he would be!
 - 2. When the angel spoke to Mary, he revealed that Jesus would be called...
 - a. “the Son of the Most High” (Lk 1:32)
 - b. “holy” (Lk 1:35)

3. By this time, Joseph and Mary ought to have known the utter uniqueness of their own son—they should have been open to the unexpected!
 4. If Jesus was the holy Son of the Most High God, then where else in Jerusalem could Jesus have been but in the house of the heavenly Father?
- D. The fact that Jesus calls God “my Father” speaks volumes!
1. It demonstrates that the young Jesus experienced an unusual sense of closeness to God and affinity to sacred things.
 2. In a sense, the temple was where he ultimately belonged, not the home in Nazareth.
 3. Jesus was demonstrating filial piety to his ultimate Father—the Lord YHWH!
- E. If Jesus was the holy Son of God, then he would have naturally gravitated to the holiest of places—the temple!

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How did Jesus respond to his parents? (2) “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” What facts about Jesus did Joseph and Mary already know about Jesus such that their question perplexed him? (3) What is the significance of Jesus’ calling God “my Father”? What does this suggest about Jesus’ self-awareness at this time?

IX. They Did Not Understand (Lk 2:50, 51)

- A. Joseph and Mary “did not understand the saying that he spoke to them” (v 50)
- B. Mary and Joseph had no idea, no concept for what their own son had just said to them.
- C. They were thinking at one level, but Jesus was thinking at another level.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How did Jesus’ parents respond to what he said? (2) Why do you think they did not understand Jesus? (3) In what ways has Jesus exploded your own expectations and preconceived notions?

X. Jesus Was Submissive to Them (Lk 2:51)

- A. After meeting up with his parents, Jesus “went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them” (2:51)
 1. Notice that Jesus did not insist on remaining at the temple.
 2. Jesus continued to honor his parents to the extent his own loyalty to God allowed him.
 3. This shows that his remaining at the temple was not out of defiance to his parents.
- B. What we have here is a picture of a young boy living his life in two worlds.
 1. On the one hand, because of his heavenly origin, Jesus would always be drawn to holy realities—his actions will not always make sense to ordinary humans.

2. On the other hand, because he is also human, Jesus was obliged to obey his parents and accommodate their wishes.
3. Jesus showed filial piety on both sides—to God and also to his earthly parents.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How did Jesus’ parents respond to what he said? (2) Jesus was both Son of God and son of man. What would these two sonships have meant for him? (3) In what way has your heavenly identity as a Christian been challenged by “earthly” requirements?

XI. The Boy Jesus—the Father’s Vision for Young People

Just as the young Jesus loved God, gravitated toward God, knew God as the very heart, meaning, and purpose of his life, so too should we Christian children and youth.

- A. First, let’s deal with the discouragements against imitating Jesus.
 1. “You are not Jesus.”
 - a. Unlike us...
 - i. Jesus had no sin.
 - ii. Jesus was also the Son of God in a special way—he was divine.
 - b. But if we have believed in Jesus, we have been given the Holy Spirit of Jesus.
 - i. The Spirit of Jesus helps us to know God as our Abba Father, in a way similar to how Jesus himself knew God.
 - ii. Galatians 4:6: “And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”
 - c. While there will always be a world of difference between Jesus and us; the fact is, God does expect us to become more and more like Jesus in the way he relates to God.
 2. “You have higher priorities now.”
 - a. Some may have told us that the most important thing in life at our age is to study hard, get into a good school.
 - b. In their view, religion is a co-curricular activity, not the essence of life.
 - c. But even at the age of twelve, our Lord Jesus knew that the most important reality in life is *almighty God*.
 - d. God is the most good, beautiful, perfect, and powerful reality there is.
- B. Like Jesus, we love God as our Dear Father.
 1. If we have believed in Jesus, we are children of God (Jn 1:12), we can call God “dear Father” (Rom 8:15).
 2. We need to start relating to God as Father.
 3. We do this by calling to God often in prayer.
 4. What can we pray for?

- We pray for more love and affection for God.
 - We pray for the forgiveness of sins.
 - We pray for a greater desire to know and surrender to God.
 - We pray for the ability to pray more!
- C. Like Jesus, we busy ourselves in the Word of God.
1. Jesus explained his time with the rabbis in terms of being “in my Father’s house.”
 2. This shows us that reading and studying the Word of God is an important part of living with God.
 3. Like Jesus in Luke 2, we busy ourselves in the Word of God by...
 - a. *Listening* to teachers of the Word.
 - b. *Asking* questions of teachers of the Word.
 - i. We ask to clarify meanings.
 - ii. We ask to help us apply what we have learned.
 - For example:
 - What does this teaching of God, say in Luke 2, mean for this or that situation in life?
 - What kind of *person* does God want me to become as a result of this episode in Jesus’ life?
 - What does this episode in Jesus’ life have to say to parents, and teachers, and pastors?
 4. By listening and asking questions, the young Lord Jesus was showing his future disciples what exactly is involved in studying the Bible.
 - a. Listening and questioning are necessary components of Bible study.
 - b. If we don’t listen...
 - i. we are being disobedient and disrespectful to God and his servants
 - ii. we won’t know what questions to ask.
 - c. If we don’t question, we probably are not really listening.
 5. God want us to be fully engaged when we read his Word—and engagement means being willing to take the time to think carefully about the Scriptures and ask Scripture-inspired questions.
 6. The long-term goal in studying the Bible is to come to a point where we don’t just ask, “What does this Scripture say to this or that situation in my life?”
 - Rather, the question becomes, “What questions does this Scripture want me to ask?”
 7. In this episode, Jesus—YHWH in human flesh—is demonstrating what a model student should be in *any* discipline of life. A Jesus-like student would...
 - a. *respect* his or her teachers
 - b. *listen* carefully to what they say
 - c. *ask* thoughtful questions
 - d. *produce* wise, insightful answers that enrich the lives of others.

- D. Like Jesus, we continue to submit to our parents and other earthly authorities.
1. While God always has first place, God himself generously makes space for other authorities in our lives—parents, teachers, etc. (Rom 13:1)
 2. God wants us to obey our parents.
 3. While Jesus could have demanded to remain at the temple, he graciously submitted to his parents' wishes and returned home with them.
 4. Therefore, we should not use God as an excuse to be lazy in our studies and other duties!
 5. After we have served God by hearing his Word, we serve God by doing the work that has been entrusted to us (Eph 6:5, 6). This means...
 - Doing our homework
 - Doing our chores
 - Being faithful children, students, and employees

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What are some things/messages that discourage you from seeking God first? (2) Like Jesus, we love God as our Abba Father. (a) What does this mean? (b) How does prayer help us to experience God as Father? (c) What should we be praying for? (3) Based on the example of the young Jesus, what is involved in Bible study? What role does *listening* and *asking questions* play in knowing God's Word? (4) What is a major long-term goal in studying the Bible? What is the model student like based on Jesus' example? (5) Like Jesus, we continue to submit to our parents and other earthly authorities. (a) How have you used God as an excuse for disobedience to your parents or laziness in your studies? (b) How can our humble obedience to our parents be turned into service to God? (c) What are some duties your parents require of you now? Ask God to bless these duties and turn them into opportunities to serve him.