

Message Series: Preparing for the Savior.
Message 10: The Boyhood of the Savior. Luke 2:40-52
Pastor Roger Ridley, Gretna Baptist Church – February 4, 2007

Those of you who are parents, do you have any precious memories of your children as they were growing? There are moments from the lives of each of my children that are special to Sheryl and me. If that is also true of you then together we can identify with what the Scriptures often record about Mary the mother of Jesus. Luke 2:51 says she kept or treasured things in her heart.

There is a program on television called *Nanny* where a woman goes into a home to help parents deal with very unruly children. I have wondered what it must be like to be parents of children like that. I am happy that was not my experience. But on the other hand, have you ever wondered what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph to be parents of Jesus?

In Luke 2:40-52 we are privileged with just a glimpse of what it must have been like as we are given a brief record of the boyhood of Jesus from which we gain some valuable insights about Him. Please open your Bibles to that passage with me...

I. A Normal Child

First, we learn that Jesus was a normal child. This is especially obvious in verses 40 and 52.

Verse 40...

Verse 52...

There has always been the temptation of some to turn the childhood of Jesus into that of a Super Boy with superhuman powers. Many of the apocryphal writings from the first couple of centuries are peppered with miracles Jesus did as a child. There is one story of Jesus at five years old making pigeons out of clay and watching them fly away. Something in us wants to think of the Christ Child in that way, but He was not. His first miracle did not occur, according to John 2:11, until He began His public ministry.

The Scriptures do not describe a child characterized by miraculous powers but instead, they describe a child with normal physical growth; verse 40, He grew physically, and normal mental growth; verse 52, He increased in wisdom.

To further illustrate that the childhood of Jesus was normal I want to compare these statements about Him with other famous children of the Bible:

Judges 13:24 describes Samson...

1 Samuel 2:26 describes Samuel...

Luke 1:80 describes John the Baptist...

Jesus, in every way as these others was a normal child.

We also see this in his behavior. Verses 41-45 describe a specific incident from His life...

At first, we are surprised by the seeming neglect of Joseph and Mary. We wonder how they could have gone so long without knowing Jesus was absent.

Our day is very different isn't it? We would not think of allowing our children to be out of someone's supervision for any amount of time. Such is the evil day we live in. But that has not always been so. I remember with pleasure the days of my childhood growing up in the hills of Tennessee. I would be out all day long exploring, looking for field diamonds, looking for arrowheads, making forts, and no one would have ever thought my parents were neglecting me. As in the days of Noah, evil has also multiplied in our lifetime.

For protection, Joseph and Mary would have traveled to and from Jerusalem in a large caravan with the women in front and the men in back. On the journey the children would often move back and forth among family and friends. That is why they went for a full day's journey before they realized Jesus was not with them.

I like the words in verse 43, “*the child Jesus tarried behind.*” Can you think of any words that more appropriately describe the average young boy? Young boys often tarry, don’t they?

And here’s the point; Jesus grew, thought, and behaved like a normal child. Now, that makes some uncomfortable, but it should actually be exciting to us.

First, it does not detract in any way from His divinity. The Scriptures plainly teach that Jesus was God in the flesh (John 1:14), and that coming in the likeness of man, He emptied Himself, He set aside His divine prerogatives (Philippians 2:7). So that, as a five year old He was not going around embarrassing His parents with the indiscriminate use of divine powers. He was a perfect five year old, but He was a normal five year old. At age twelve, as described in this passage, He was a perfect twelve year old, but a normal twelve year old. Because even though He was God, He humbled Himself, was born as a child and grew as a child.

In fact, this was necessary for us. Hebrews 2:17 says, “*Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*” Jesus had to come as He did, in true humanity, be born and live as us, without sin, that He might save us from our sins.

Seeing Jesus as a normal child should also provide comfort. Hebrews 4:15 says, “*for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*” No matter what age we are, no matter what difficulties or temptations we face, we can go to Jesus, because He has been there, and find understanding and help.

II. An Exceptional Child

Not only was Jesus a normal child but we also learn from this passage that He was an exceptional child. Look at verses 46-47...

The scene itself is not unusual. At twelve it would be expected that a young Jewish boy would receive instruction from religious leaders. What was unusual was the kind of questions He was asking and the kind of answers He

was giving to their questions. They were not what you would normally expect from a twelve year old who was a carpenter's son. For His age He showed exceptional insight and those who heard Him were astonished.

Does this mean that He was speaking in all His divine wisdom? No. Remember, He had humbled Himself and set aside His divine prerogatives. It does illustrate two things for us though: (1) how sharp a mind can be that is not corrupted by sin, and (2) what goes into our thinking and becomes part of our thinking is also what comes out.

At twelve, Jesus astonished the teachers because He demonstrated how sharp the mind can be when it is not corrupted by sin and instead is filled with thoughts that are pleasing to the heavenly Father.

That's actual what God wants for all of us who are considered His children. In Romans 1:2 instead of being conformed to this world He wants our minds to be transformed that we might prove what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. God wants our minds to be sharper and our thinking pleasing to Him.

III. A Divine Child

Jesus was a normal and exceptional child, but He was also a divine child.

In verse 48, upon finding Him, Mary said, *"Your father and I have sought thee sorrowing."* As any parent, they were deeply concerned and fearful at His absence.

Verse 49 then records the first recorded words of Jesus, *"How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"*

Verse 50 says that Joseph and Mary did not understand His response, but His response indicates they should have. They both had been visited by angels before His birth, they were both aware of the unusual circumstances connected with His birth and following, and apparently they had raised Him to know what was important, so where else did they think hey would find Him?

Which makes me wonder, if you or I were missing, where would those who know us think to look for us? The answer will say a lot about us.

The response of Jesus also indicates an awareness of His purpose. He said, “*I must.*” Those words will often come from His lips as we follow Him through the Gospels.

Luke 4:43...

John 4: 4...

Whether it happened at twelve or earlier we do not know but Jesus was aware of His divine mission and lived in light of it.

I often wonder if we as God’s children today are really aware of God’s purpose in our lives. Certainly it is different than that of Jesus as God the Son, but we are still to live in light of God’s purpose. Can you say that you are?

We also see in the response of Jesus an awareness of His Sonship. Note the contrast in verses 48 and 49...

The difference conveys an awareness of His unique relationship with the heavenly Father.

Again, we wonder when He became aware of this? Many would say it was at the age of twelve, when, according to Jewish custom, He became a man. That may very well be, but the Scripture doesn’t say. It is important however to notice that He knew, and He lived in light of what He knew.

By way of application, do we know, do we really understand that we are the children of God, and are we seeking to live in light of it?

The fact that Jesus knew who He was makes verse 51 seem incredible...

Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient (Philippians 2:8). What a tremendous example for us! That is why Philippians 2:5 says, “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*”

You and I, because of our relationship with the heavenly Father by faith in Jesus Christ are to live lives of humility and obedience.

This passage, stressing the humanity but also the divinity of the Christ Child, illustrates for us the extent that God, because of his great love for us, went in our behalf. John 3:16 says...

I wonder this morning, do you fully understand what God has done for us in the sending of His Son in the likeness of man?

Have you received the gift of His Son by faith; asking Him to be your Savior?

And are you living in light of what you now know?